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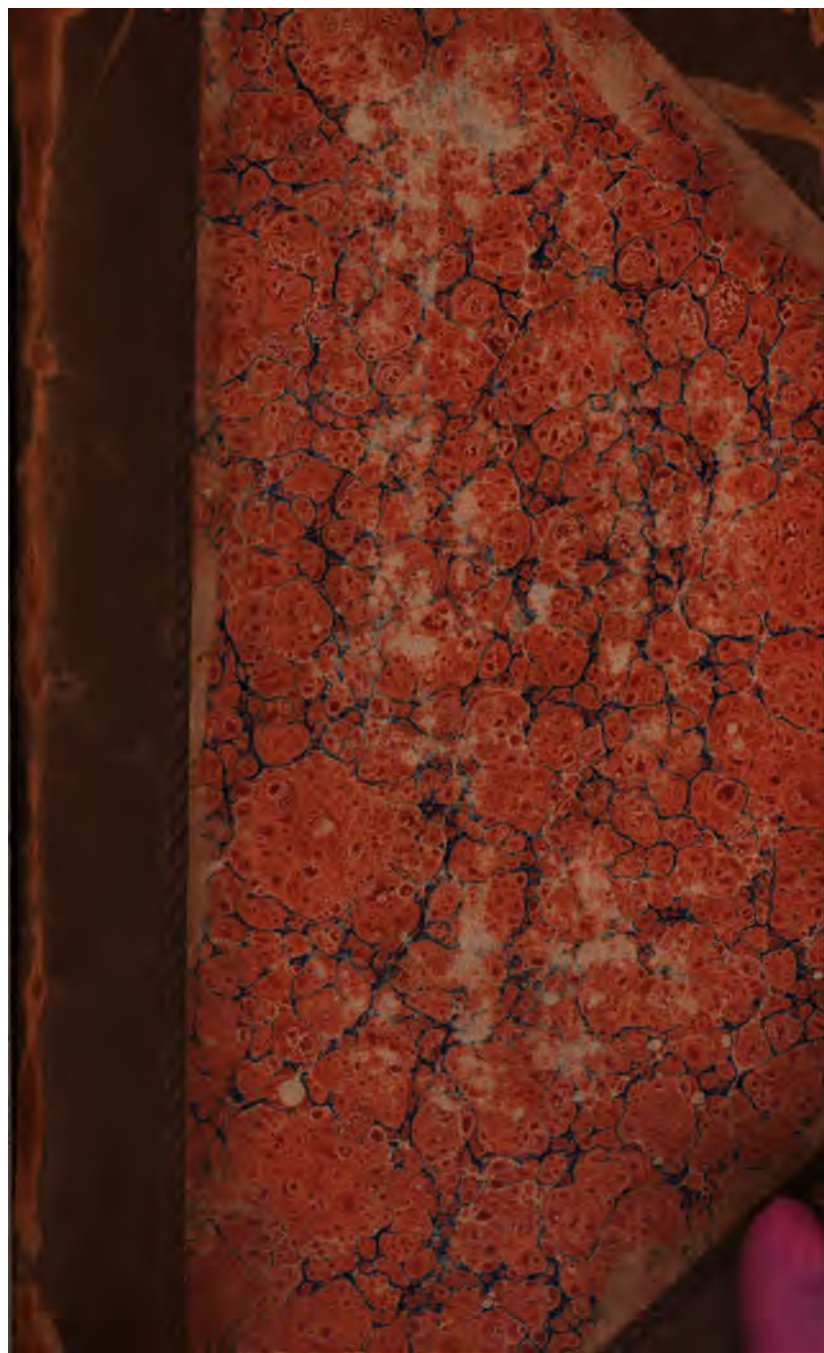
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# PAULUS PAROCHIALIS;

OR, A

PLAIN AND PRACTICAL VIEW

OF THE

OBJECT, ARGUMENTS, AND  
CONNECTION,

OF

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans:

*In a Series of Sermons, adapted to  
Country Congregations.*

BY THE

WM. LISLE BOWLES,

PREBENDARY OF SARUM.

per alios dispositionem nostræ salutis cognovimus, quam  
nos EVANGELIUM pervenit ad nos, quod quidem  
est, postea vero, per Dei voluntatem, in Sciri-  
ficium, FUNDAMENTUM, et COLUMNAM,  
IRENEUS.

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1826.

98.



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## PREFACE.

---

THE following Discourses—on a subject somewhat difficult to treat, clearly and plainly—were preached many years ago, and were occasioned by a direct interference with the concerns of my Parish ; the details of which, as the subject has been long forgotten, I shall not enter into.

A plain view of the leading scope of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans seemed, at the time, peculiarly necessary, as some lamentable cases occurred, in consequence of Calvinistic doctrines.

I have given my own opinion, formed on the most deliberate reflection, and conviction, but do not arrogate to myself, that most intolerant and inconsistent of all presumptions in a Protestant, a right to arraign or condemn the opinions of those,

who, with the Bible before them, have been led to different conclusions.

I have witnessed the baleful effect of Calvinistic doctrines ; and I cannot admit the main points of this gloomy creed, without resigning my understanding, rejecting the plain word of God, or believing, with the Valentinians,

τον Διαβολον κοσμοκρατερα.

*Irenæus, page 28.*

One observation is important, which I believe has never been pointed out before.

Calvin's scheme, of personal predestination, is that of Thomas Aquinas, the angel of the Roman Catholic Schools !! So, also, is the definition of what are called "EXPERIENCES" in religion !\* a term so dreadfully abused in the seventeenth century, and so liable to abuse at all times.

As a parochial minister, I thought the best and least offensive way of answering Calvinistic and other *tracts*,† in order to shew that the belief of *particular election*,

\* See page xvii.

† If it be said, that surely every one has a right to disperse what religious book he pleases ; I answer, undoubtedly he has. I have also a right, as a clergyman, to examine those books I meet with, and answer what I think *unscriptural* ; particularly, if, in these tracts, the *rights of conscience*, which we concede to all, are not conceded to us.

or of sensible EXPERIENCES, was neither *useful* nor *necessary* for a *christian*, would be to explain, as well as I was able, in terms that the meanest understanding might comprehend, not only the general purport of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, from a false view of which these doctrines, as I believe, have been derived; but particularly to examine those passages which, viewed distinctly and separately from the main argument, have been the occasion of other mistaken views.

The following Discourses, written with this particular object, have no other pretensions than those of plainness and perspicuity: but in points disputed, I hope they will enable those for whose use they were written, to give a "reason for their faith," when it is attacked.

Various excellent commentaries have been written; but there are none which give a plain and compendious view of the Epistle to the Romans, suited to the circumstances under which these discourses were composed and preached.

In speaking on disputed topics, I have made it a point to adhere as much as possible to scriptural *words*; knowing that misunderstandings have arisen, and always will arise, from *unscriptural* and *undefined* words.

I have made no quotations, and drawn no argument from the book of Revelations, because no truth can be established from *prophecies not yet fulfilled*, and from that which is professedly given as a *vision*.

After laying down some general, and I hope sound principles, I have divided the subject of these discourses, first, into those points which relate to doctrines; secondly, those which relate to the inward dispositions and affections of the heart; and thirdly, those which relate to the familiar intercourse of a christian life, which I think is the mode pursued by St. Paul himself. In doing this, I have endeavoured to convince those to whom these discourses were preached, that to the integrity of christian truth, or the purity of a christian life, neither gloom nor austerity are necessary on the one hand, nor enthusiasm or melancholy abstraction on the other.

As to *words*, a great deal would be gained to the cause of truth and charity, if all terms and combinations of words were avoided as much as possible, except such as are found in the gospel itself; and if no positions were deduced from them, but the immediate meaning they strictly convey: and also when *feelings*

are concerned, if the correctives and *definitions* generally added by St. Paul were constantly and carefully kept in view.

With respect to the scriptural definition of *feelings*, a certain rule can never be obtained, but we must be guided by the general tenour of the gospel; and at least always remember those feelings which *are* defined. I am not speaking of feelings excited by the consciousness of individual crimes, ("the heart knoweth its own bitterness,") but of the habitual feelings of common christians.

As to the intercourse of life, I have kept my eye steadily upon the picture of St. Paul himself. The nature of my subject made it necessary for me to draw a slight and imperfect sketch; but this need not now be regretted, after the recent and more animated portrait from the pious and eloquent MORE.

If any parts of these discourses should appear to the more accomplished reader to approach in style to "homeliness," he will recollect that the only object I had in view, was to make the subject plain for plain people.

In respect to some points on which I may be thought to have spoken too peremptorily and uncharitably, particularly with regard to Calvin, I beg to be understood that I neither have thrown, nor wish to throw, the slightest

imputation on those who sincerely and conscientiously think his opinions, or any part or shade of them, to be *scriptural*. If I have made use of expressions which may be so understood, I deeply regret it, because with any man's sincere and conscientious belief I have no right to interfere. I condemn only the *assumed infallibility* and *consequent intolerance* of others. As to myself, I wish temperately, but firmly, to vindicate what I sincerely believe to be christian truth, and the doctrines of the church to which I belong, however weak an advocate; but as I most freely grant the rights of conscience to all, of whatever name or communion of christians, so I hope that the same will not be denied to me.

For the mode in which I have spoken of the individual John Calvin himself, I make no apology or concession. Conscientious religious opinions are sacred; but I trust we may always speak of treachery and bloodshed without an "IF" or a "BUT;" although with respect to the act of the murder of the wretched Servetus, I know that all the churches in Switzerland, and many others, as well as distinguished individuals, did justify that act at the time.\*

If it be said, that in Calvin's religious opinions there is interwoven much which is *scriptural*,

\* See Appendix.

I answer *undoubtedly*: so there is in Servetus himself, although Calvin, when the poor wretch under the terrors of death entreated his forgiveness, exhorted him “ to ask of the “ ETERNAL GOD FORGIVENESS, for having “ attempted to blot three HYPOSTASES out “ of his ESSENCE!!”

It might lessen the respect which the *particular* or Calvinistic Baptists bear for the name of the stern reformer of Geneva, if it were generally known among them, that one of the articles for which Calvin exerted himself to get Servetus burnt, (AND FOR WHICH HE WOULD HAVE BURNT THEM,) was the “ blasphemous denial of infant baptism.” The 37th article drawn up by Calvin against Servetus was, “ that he had written and published horrid *blasphemies* against INFANT “ baptism.”

I have already spoken of religious feelings; I must further say, that as it is impossible there can be any exact agreement; so, if it were possible, it might not be necessary, as such feelings must depend so much on the state of every man’s mind. One man may feel a consciousness of actual crimes, from which another may be free. But independent of that repentance and humiliation which all sinful creatures, standing in the sight of their Maker, must confess to be necessary, a mistaken idea



is often encouraged, that without having first experienced the deepest lacerations of a wounded heart, no one can be a *christian*.

The murderer of a father or mother could not express, under the agonies of remorse, greater horror, than some individuals are taught to express, under what is called the *awakened conviction of sin*. No difference is made between the conscience of this man, or that of another, but each in turn is described as in the agonies of horror or despair.

Where are such violent and exaggerated feelings found in the gospel of our LORD? True, most true, a deep sense of our sins and infirmities, as fallen creatures, is required, from one end of the gospel to the other. The first word uttered by him who prepared the way, was, *repent*; and the first word spoken by the divine preacher was, *repent*. And he who was justified rather than the other was the publican, who smote his breast, and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" The purest man that ever lived might say, in the language of our church, "we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep; we have left undone that which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us. But thou, O LORD, have

“ mercy upon us, miserable offenders; spare  
 “ Thou them which confess their faults; re-  
 “ store Thou them that are penitent.” But  
 in the language of our church, as in that of  
 the gospel, there is nothing tumultuous; no  
 frantic ravings; no exclamation of horror.  
 The tear of christianity is that of meek and  
 lowly penitence, not of agonizing remorse.

The religion of those who preach such  
*feelings* is *caught* from each other, not learned  
 from the word of GOD; and out of many  
 histories of *conversion*, I have not found  
 one of a person *converted* to such christi-  
 anity BY THE BIBLE! and yet we have  
 been sometimes told to look into our bibles,  
 to see that this excited state of feelings is  
 common. The only cases which are like  
 it, and which I have seen adduced to shew  
 the necessity of such impassioned sorrow, are  
 two in the Old Testament, and two in the  
 New. Now let us examine these cases, and  
 see whether *one*, out of them all, applies, or  
 can apply, to us as *christians in general*.

David has said, “ I have watered my couch  
 “ with tears, I have no rest by reason of my  
 “ sin :” and well indeed he might, having  
 committed adultery and murder; having  
 murdered an innocent man, to defile an in-  
 nocent woman. When we have committed  
 such crimes, let us equal him in his agonies

of remorse. GOD only can pardon, who sees the heart.

We are told further, to justify such extravagance as I have mentioned, to look at Job. Job indeed exclaimed, in the bitterness of the moment, "let the day perish in which "I was born." But Job was tried in a manner which never, perhaps, will happen again; the LORD saying unto Satan, "BE-  
"HOLD, HE IS IN THY POWER!" He lost in one hour all his earthly comforts, his children, and fell to the ground, desolate in his anguish, smitten and forsaken of GOD. "Yet in all this Job sinned not;" and many years before CHRIST came upon earth, expressed the resignation of a *christian*. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, "and naked shall I return unto the earth; "the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken "away; blessed be the name of the LORD!"

We presume, then, that the case of Job can be no case of comparison with us, *generally speaking*; and if we would imitate his language, let it be that only of his pious resignation.

Such are the examples brought from the Old Testament, to shew us that we ought to have the same feelings before we can be converted. Let us turn to the New Testament. One example is that of St. Paul, and another of St. Peter. Of St. Paul, when he

was *miraculously converted* ; and of St. Peter, when he converted *three thousand at once* !

Let us see how little either of these cases can apply to us. St. Paul, it is said, was dismayed, and “ *suddenly fell to the earth ;* ” and therefore we are to express the like horror and dismay. But recollect for a moment, how different is the case. St. Paul was supernaturally and miraculously called, in the midst of lightning, and when the “ voice of “ God himself was heard from heaven.” Yet how calmly is even this awful and supernatural event, the most stupendous visitation in the history of revelation, recorded. “ And suddenly there shined round about him a light “ from heaven, and he fell to the earth, and “ he heard a voice ; and he trembling and “ astonished said, ‘ LORD, what wilt thou “ have me to do ? ”

In the first place, then, this example can be no example for christians in general ; in the next place, even if it were, there is nothing here described of feelings more than so awful a circumstance must naturally produce. How far removed from passion are these feelings ! and when St. Paul describes the same event himself, his language is still more composed.

The conversion of *three thousand* by St. Peter is among the examples I had chosen to illustrate the perfect *sobriety* of the scrip-

ture tyle, in comparison with that of enthusiasts: but the example has been adduced in favour of a contrary opinion: therefore because the Jews, "who crucified the LORD of life," at the preaching of St. Paul were "pricked to the heart, and cried out, What shall we do?" those who have *not* crucified the LORD of life, nor done any particular act, on account of which they feel the *pangs of remorse*, are to be raised to a greater emotion than is even described by St. Peter, when he addresses the guilty Jews.

Those who think such an excited state of *sensations* necessary for devotion, call christians less influenced "lukewarm professors." Compared with such exaggerated accounts, both St. Peter and St. Paul must be ranked as "lukewarm professors."

The Reformers of our church evinced the most profound wisdom, dispassionate judgment, and accurate knowledge of the scriptures, when they guarded every doctrine from the extremes to which they might lead, by keeping them as close as possible, without visions and without theories, to the *intirenefs* of scripture, considered with reference to its general spirit, and comparing *words with words*, and *passages with passages*. By these means they did not dwell on *one part* to the exclusion of *another*; exaggerate the necessity of

*some doctrines*, and diminish the *regard to others*; press into a narrow view the *first part* of St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, and overlook *the last*; take a *separate text* to support a *partial opinion*; but kept the consistent and harmonious **WHOLE** constantly in view.

Hence they vindicated without reserve the doctrines of a fallen and corrupted state of man, "far gone from original righteousness;" but without pressing this doctrine into the black mass of *morak putridity*, derived from the idea of a "sovereign principle of **EVIL**," which, in its exaggeration of shade and sorrow, had its origin from *Persian darkness*, not from Christian light. They held fast *faith*, the deep foundation of christian hope and christian charity; but regarding equally the apostolic authority of St. James and St. Paul, never separated it from its natural and legitimate fruits; or in the smallest degree countenanced the Mahometan\* doctrine of "faith without works," and called it the gospel of **JESUS**.

All that related to the inward spirit, of love, of joy, of consolation, of animation, they never attempted in the smallest manner to repress; but only to regulate and subdue

\* A sect of Mahometans, described by D'Herbelot, (Bibliotheque Orient.) hold this opinion.

to the scripture test; to try them by the gospel, not the gospel by *them*, as is boldly done by Barclay; lest the seraphic abstractions of corrupted Platonism might be mistaken for the fervent and unaffected feelings of christian devotion.

The doctrines of eternal decrees they admitted with great circumspection, and

§ I trust it will not be conceived, from what I have said of Barclay, that I would speak with the slightest disrespect of the religious society called Quakers. No one has a higher veneration than myself for the memory and virtues of William Penn. Many parts of Barclay's Apology are delightful; but the first position must lead to error, and tend to generate such enthusiasts as Naylor, who rode into Bristol under the name of JESUS CHRIST!! The recurrence of such fanaticism is only prevented by the Society's internal regulations, and strong moral correctives. So that they are thus obliged, after all, to try the Spirit by *common morals*, which they disdain to *try by the Bible!* By these means, however, though their whole theory is shaken, they preserve their society among the most exemplary of the christian world.

I cannot here pass by a most important observation by Barclay; it is this. If it be said, the "Spirit" is an uncertain and dangerous test of truth, so also, he affirms, is the Bible itself; for as many dissensions, animosities, and extravagancies have arisen among those who profess to make the Bible their rule, as among those who make the "Spirit" their rule. He then speaks of the deplorable excesses in Germany after the Reformation. Now the answer is plain. People do not agree who make the *Spirit* their rule; because without immediate inspiration they *cannot*: they do not agree, when they profess to make the Bible their rule, because **THEY WILL NOT.**

perhaps purposely left obscure; referring every man to scripture upon this disputed point, and suffering him to judge for himself. They approached the shrine of divine truth with humility and veneration, holding every thought in deep and obedient subjection. From the awful record of the holy volume they seemed never to divert their look. The faith they spoke of was the apostolic faith, combined with hope and charity; whilst their devotional spirit was equally guarded from rapture on one hand, as their devotional feelings were from the uncertain "EXPERIENCES,"\* the *instantaneous conversions* and

\* Great stress having been laid on the word "experience," as a proof of our progress in grace, by those who accuse the Church of England as being half Popish, it may be necessary (as this word is only used twice by St. Paul, and not at all by JESUS CHRIST, or any apostle except St. Paul) to trace it to its "birth-place." The word, in most of the tracts which I have seen, is used in conjunction with an assurance of being in the way of grace. Where then are we to find this "*experience*," peculiarly applied to religious feelings, and connected with a "*sweet*" assurance? In the dusty and forgotten corners of the Popish schools lurks this very "experience," which blooms anew in the works of many modern divines, who would cast it away "like a filthy rag," if they had known from whence it came. The words of the angelic doctor, AQUINAS, are these: "QUI ACCIPIT GRATIAM, 'per quamdam 'EXPERIENTIAM DULCEDINIS,' novit se 'illam habere, quam non EXPERITUR, ille qui non accipit.'" The "*sweetness*" is accounted for by Thomas,



*sweet infusions* of THOMAS AQUINAS, on the other. §

Perhaps I may in some instances be thought over fastidious in rejecting unscriptural words and combinations, but it is a fault, at least, on the right side, and cannot mislead. And I would beg the reader to consider how much uncharitableness and strife have arisen from want of this attention.

I will only mention a very few of the names of sects, and shadows of sects, which appeared soon after the Reformation; each opposing, and vehemently condemning, and cruelly persecuting each other, for nothing but words *not* scriptural. Consubstantiation was armed against transubstantiation. Here were Solifidians, Anti-Diaphorists, Confessionals; there Adiaphorists, Calvinists, Anti-Calvinists, Triss-Sacramen-

saying "*it is like manna*;" but after all he acknowledges it is not a *certain* test.

"He who has received (grace,) knows that he has received it by a CERTAIN EXPERIENCE OF SWEETNESS, which he who has not received it does not EXPERIENCE." Translation of Aquinas.—"The justification of a sinner is in an *instant*, not in SUCCESSION."—"The 'INFUSION' of *grace* is in an instant, not in succession." Ibid.

§ Justificatio impiorum non est SUCCESSIVA, sed INSTANTANEA! Aquinas, Ques. cxiii.—GRATIE INFUSIO fit INSTANTI, absque successione!! Aquinas, ibid.

tarians, Anti-Sarcarians. Here Zwinglians simple, and Zwinglians significative, and Anti-Swalfeldians; whilst the humble worshippers of Jesus, such as poor Philip Melancton, hung their heads, and said, "alas! "WHERE ARE CHRISTIANS?"†

Having constantly, attentively, and seriously read the scriptures, I could form no other conclusion than that which in the sincerity of my soul I did form. As I know men of piety and intellectual eminence had come to a different conclusion, I thought it a sacred duty I owed to such characters to weigh their arguments; and I have, therefore, paid more attention to *their* writings, than to the writings of those who may view the subject in the same light with myself.

† In considering attentively this subject, I found it necessary to go much deeper, to trace the original sources of error and corruption; and there is now in the press, by the author of this book, an Historical Sketch of the chief Causes which have led to the perversion of the plain sense of the Bible, from the earliest ages to the present.

1<sup>st</sup>. From the Evil Principle and Destiny of the Persians.

2<sup>d</sup>. From the fanaticism of Montanus, and the morose Puritanism of his disciple Tertullian.

3<sup>d</sup>. From the still, contemplative, and seraphic, abstraction of the later school of Plato.

And 4<sup>th</sup>, From the scholastic, abstruse, metaphysical, and wordy school of Aristotle.

To be published in a volume, the size of the present.

What I have written and published has been in consequence of my bounden duty: under the same circumstances, most of the Clergy of the church may have performed this duty better, but some of my arguments may be found useful in assisting to turn the scale in favour of sober christianity, among those who are beginning to doubt. For myself, notwithstanding the veneration I cheerfully pay to many great names, after all the arguments I have met, with in various writings, my own conviction, so far from being shaken, has been made stronger, if possible, than before; namely, that the peculiar doctrines of the Calvinistic creed are as remote from pure and primitive christianity as *darkness is from light*, as *earth is from heaven*, as the character of Calvin is from that, in his human capacity, of the MEEK AND LOWLY JESUS !||

P. S. I conclude these observations with a remarkable fact; that one of the charges brought against the Roman Catholic clergy, at the time of the Reformation, was that of IGNORANCE, a charge true to a great extent; although Luther, Melancton, Calvin, as well as Erasmus, giants in genius and

|| I speak principally of "personal election," and the impossibility of falling from grace.

learning, and many other scholars of illustrious name, were educated in the Roman church. Yet during the time of the Reformation, which could not, without a miracle, have taken place at all without learning, some protestant sects arose, decrying, as they do now, *book-learning*, (though no one had more *book-learning* than St. Paul,) and contending that the *spirit* was all. Some of these fanatics Luther himself opposed; but, in fact, universal ignorance, from the sixth to the twelfth century, was the cause of the grossest superstition; *not* the Romish religion, the cause of ignorance. And ignorance always has been, and always will be, the parent of superstition and fanaticism, not more among one description of Christians than another.

I have sometimes thought, that the art of printing, and the open Bible, would in time, silently and quietly, have caused a reformation; and that then there would have been at this time very, very few *bigoted Papists*, or, what is worse, *bigoted Protestants*, in Europe.\* The intolerance of

\* There is no more reason why a man should be a bigot, because he believes in transubstantiation, than because he believes in consubstantiation: but when he assumes *infallibility*, he naturally becomes UNCHRISTIAN and intolerant, whether Papist or Protestant; and Calvinists, except such as Baxter and Beveridge, are

some of the reformers made both ; and the most deplorable results to religion have been the consequence : because plain people identify this *system* or that with *truth*, which, but for recondite theological *theories*, would never, from the general tenor of the Bible, have entered into a plain man's head.

These Discourses have been long confined to private circulation, for the use of my own Parish :\* they are now published, as it has been thought they might be more widely serviceable.

W. L. BOWLES.

*Bremhill, May 1826.*

as often guilty in this respect as Roman Catholics. There is a great distinction between a Papist and Catholic, though both acknowledge the paramount authority of the *Church*. These try the *gospel* by the *Church*, as others do by the *Spirit*; the result is the same in either—INFALLIBILITY.

\* With the exception of a few copies sold at Bath.

**CORRIGENDA.**

- Page 44, l. 18, for "*naturally*," read "*nationally*."  
61, l. 12, for "*not through ignorance*," read "*I went through ignorance*."  
63, l. 14, for "*longer suffering*," read "*long-suffering*."  
l. 15, for "*filled*," read "*fitted*."  
l. 20, for "*once called*," read "*will call*."

*By the same Author,*

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## SERMON I.



ROMANS i. 7.

*To all that be in Rome, beloved of God,  
called to be saints, grace to you, and peace  
from GOD our Father, and the LORD JESUS  
CHRIST.*

**D**URING the season of Lent, a period more particularly set apart by our church for serious meditation, I have usually made it a rule to call your attention to the doctrines of Christianity, and especially to those parts and passages of scripture, which appear less easy to be understood.

In the course of the last three years, at this season, I confined myself to explaining obscure passages in the four gospels; and I shall now, with the same design, and indeed further induced by circumstances\* which I need not here particularly mention, open St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans; the most ob-

\* The dispersion of tracts, founded in misunderstanding, as I conceive, of passages in this epistle.



scure, but the most important, as far as the right understanding of the doctrine is concerned, of any of the books in the New Testament. The difficulty and obscurity are probably the chief reasons why it has been appealed to so often and so confidently. For it is undoubtedly more easy to build any doctrinal system, true or false, on that which is obscure, than on that which is plain and explicit: though it is seldom considered that what was written to a *particular description of people*, and on a particular occasion, cannot be so essential in itself, even if it were clearly comprehended, as those parts which are addressed to all people and to all ages.

Exactly to point out the meaning of every word or sentence, at this distance of time, is impossible; unless we could hear all the objections which they to whom the epistle was written, made to the doctrines of St. Paul. This we can only know *imperfectly* from the epistle itself; and therefore it can at best, without divine inspiration, be but *imperfectly* understood. You ought always to bear this plain fact in mind, when consequences of the utmost importance to your hopes, your happiness here, and happiness hereafter, are confidently and presumptuously drawn from it.

As those things have been and are daily done; and as we are often required to be-

lieve, not so much what the gospel says, as what people say of the gospel; I have thought it part of my duty, to the best of my own understanding, belief, and conscience, as I shall myself answer at the great day of judgment, to explain those words and sentences, which have been the occasion to many of perplexity, to some of presumption, and, I fear, to others of despair.

In humbly offering my own opinion, I do not venture to condemn others. Be their opinions what they may, the words of the Apostle too plainly speak to me and to all, in language intelligible as it is fearful: "Nay, " O man, who art thou that condemnest? " to his own Master he stands or falls."

With this feeling, therefore, uppermost in my mind, and sincerely wishing it was in the hearts of all who differ in points of doctrine, I commence a series of Discourses on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

You will always bear in mind one rule, by which I wish what I shall say to be tried,—that the gospel is one thing, and human interpretation another. By the gospel, and the gospel only, the church to which we belong must stand or fall. I therefore place my foot on this rock alone. Human opinions may fluctuate, and beat and clash on this side or on that; the gospel is the only rock of

rest to our feet, the only haven of peace to our hearts; all without, or beyond, is toil and tossing, darkness and storm. Here only rests that unerring light that guides; here only is heard the voice, which seems to say to the perplexed and weary wanderer, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Before we enter into a more particular examination of those points in which there has been found so much of difference and misunderstanding, I think we may confidently lay down this position,—that the gospel truths principally affect us in three great points; our BELIEF, our PRACTICE, and the INWARD FEELINGS, and habitual disposition, of the heart.

With respect to the *two first*, our *belief* and our *conduct*, there can be less misunderstanding, provided we confine ourselves to *essentials*, than there always must be respecting what is so uncertain as our feelings. Upon this latter point I shall not now enter.

With respect to those things, which as christians we ought *to do*, the injunctions are positive and clear; with respect to what is essential to *belief*, the circle is much narrower than we are often inclined to confess. Whatever errors, therefore, may be found as to mere points of belief, they cannot be

deduced from the short but clear summary of doctrines, which goes under the name of the Apostle's Creed.

People, therefore, the most opposite and discordant in religious creeds, have agreed in enlarging this summary. Particular circumstances occasioned the more specific formularies of the Nicene and Athanasian Creed; but no more is said in either of *predestination* and *election*, than of *purgatory* and the *mass*; and it is singular, that, when the authority of *church tradition* is cried up on one side, and what is called *gospel truth* on the other, how little really *scriptural* is often found in either. One party tries the scripture by the church, instead of the church by the scripture; and others, I think, too frequently try the gospel by their own opinions, and *not* their opinions by the gospel.

I shall here, for fear of being misunderstood, lay down the essential point in which all sincere christians agree. They agree in looking up to JESUS CHRIST as the SON OF GOD, and the REDEEMER OF MAN; and in acknowledging, that there is "none other  
"name under heaven given among men,  
"whereby we must be saved, but only  
"the name of the LORD JESUS CHRIST." Man, having forfeited his immortality, and having lost "THE IMAGE OF GOD," in

which he was created, cannot turn himself "to righteousness;" for how indeed, or by what effort of his own, could he regain that perfection in which he was created, or that immortality which only can be restored by Him who gave it? This, therefore, is the work of grace, of pardon, and of mercy; where all the natural views of man end in sin, in sorrow, and the dust, the hopes of christianity begin. With eyes lifted up, with feelings purified, with infirmities strengthened, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, we thus constantly endeavour to press forward "to *the high mark of our calling.*"

These great and striking points of what is essential in *belief*, are written in glorious, in living, I had almost said in burning characters, in every part of the book of life. We also can have no doubt of the plain rule of *christian practice* by which we ought to walk. We know what he who has redeemed us *both commanded*, namely, to do unto others as we would have them do to us; to love our neighbour as ourself; to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, and pray for them that despitefully use us. These are directions which we cannot mistake; and as to what we do not understand, it is sufficient to use our best endeavours, for

God cannot require impossibilities, and humbly and earnestly pray for his assistance.

Still, as some have laid a greater stress on those passages of the New Testament, which are more difficult to be understood, than upon those which are as clear as noon-day ; and though I seldom enter into them, being convinced that the great truths of revelation are not matters of doubtful disputation ; yet, for the causes mentioned, I shall now endeavour to give you a general insight into the chief object of St. Paul in this epistle.

When the occasion upon which it was written is taken into our consideration, which is seldom done, you will have less difficulty in understanding the words *election* and *predestination*, and other expressions which St. Paul uses on this particular occasion.

In this first discourse I shall confine myself to the general circumstances under which the epistle was written. The particular explanation of these words, and of other material matters connected with them, will be the object of the following discourses.

In the first place, before we can have an idea of the general meaning of the epistle, it will be necessary to notice the description of people to whom it was addressed. Who were they ? The people of the city of Rome, you will say. Yes ; but that is

not all : it was written more particularly to those Jews and Gentiles in the city of Rome, who had been converted to Christianity.

The Jews had taken offence because the Gentiles were invited to partake of the glorious promises of the gospel as well as themselves. "CHRIST," they assert, "whom you preach, was born *among us* ! to us was the Messiah promised ! among us were the sacred laws, and prophecies, and oracles of God deposited ! and are these distant and barbarous nations to be made partakers of the same promises, and of the same heavenly glories ?"

St. Paul's answer to them, in the first chapter, is after this manner. "True, you were chosen by the great Creator of the world as that nation among whom the promised Messiah, the Saviour, was to be born. But you understand very little of the motives of CHRIST's coming in the flesh upon earth, if you suppose it was for you and for you only. No ! it was that the sound of salvation should go out to the ends of the earth ; that, in CHRIST JESUS neither circumcision should avail any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. You had indeed the law of Moses ; but did not follow even that law, as far as it was a rule for you to walk by ; therefore

“you, as well as the Gentiles, are concluded under sin. You, because, though you had Moses and the prophets, yet refused to obey them; and **THEY**, because, though they must have known, by his works, that there was a God in heaven, yet acted in such a manner that this knowledge had no effect upon them: they were given over to a *‘reprobate mind, to work all iniquity with greediness.’* You, therefore, have no reason to boast; and *they* must confess both their ignorance and wickedness, before the righteous Judge of all the earth.”

Now all this must be borne in mind, before we can pretend to understand the meaning of the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans.

The second chapter begins with a serious address to the converted Jew. “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself.”

So far then we see, in **JESUS CHRIST**, that the Jew has no advantage over the gentile, but both are called to confess their ignorance and unworthiness. Hence the necessity arose of a new law, by which they and all mankind should be saved; being led to repentance, obedience, and a new life, through



the means of this new law. Thus the apostle calls it, in the third chapter, "the righteousness of GOD, which is by faith of JESUS CHRIST unto ALL, and upon ALL that believe; for there is *no difference*, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of GOD; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS."

Having thus explained the occasion upon which this epistle of St. Paul was written, and the general tendency of the two first chapters; I must again intreat all who hear me to remember, that those parts of the gospel of GOD are chiefly to be regarded, whose meaning cannot be mistaken by any who consult their own understanding and their own heart. But the misfortune is, many will say, that if you do not understand what is written as I understand it, your hope, your peace, your everlasting salvation is in danger. If I condemn this presumption in others, I have no right to use such language myself. I am sure that some who profess to speak confidently cannot tell the meaning, or even understand one word of the language in which the gospel was written; nor do I tell you to believe me. I have paid much attention to the subject, as is my duty; but I have no right to assume, that you are

to take my interpretation, at the risk of your salvation. This can only be done, by saying, as the Roman Catholics did of old, the church says so, and therefore you must believe; or as some do not fear to say, "I am instructed by the Spirit of God, and therefore you must believe me." The humble preacher makes no claims to particular inspiration, but endeavours to state to you the truth, as he perceives it, leaving yourself to judge.

For if one man has a right to say he has a particular light, so has another; and there is this clear proof whether the light be from God or not, that is, whether they both agree, for God cannot inspire what is true and what is false at the same time; and if one opinion be *true*, then the other must be *false*; and this must lead, as it always has, to contention and strife, not to love and charity. What then are we to do? Not to put on the presumption of the Pharisee, but the humility of the disciple of CHRIST; to thank God for what He has plainly revealed; to endeavour to walk by it; but not to perplex ourselves, and much less to condemn others, by asserting this or that to be the true meaning of passages, which after all are not essential to salvation.

In this spirit, I shall, the next Sunday, go into the other chapters of the epistle, and in the mean time let us pray to God to enlighten us, and make our christian charity in all things keep pace with christian doctrine. I conclude with the words of our collect :

“ Blessed LORD, who hast caused all holy  
 “ scriptures to be written for our learning ;  
 “ grant that we may in such wise hear them,  
 “ read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them;  
 “ that by patience, and comfort of thy holy  
 “ word, we may embrace and ever hold fast  
 “ the blessed hope of everlasting life, which  
 “ Thou hast given us in our Saviour JESUS  
 “ CHRIST.”

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## SERMON II.

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ROMANS iii. 22.

*Even the righteousness of GOD which is by  
Faith of JESUS CHRIST unto ALL, and upon  
ALL THAT BELIEVE.*

**I**N my discourse of Sunday last, after some general introductory observations, I endeavoured to give you an idea of the chief view and object of St. Paul in this epistle to the Romans; who those people were to whom it was addressed; and on what particular occasion it was written to them.

Though we cannot tell all the objections which the Jews, converted to Christianity at Rome, made to St. Paul's doctrine; yet nothing can be more obvious than this, from the whole tenor of it,—that they thought the promises of the gospel were to be confined

to themselves; and without constantly bearing in mind these prejudices and feelings of the converted Jews, and the objects of St. Paul in endeavouring to convince them of their error, we cannot even approach to a comprehension of the meaning of particular expressions,

The first words which strike us are those very momentous words—**FAITH** and **WORKS**. These therefore will form the subject of the present discourse. It must be remembered that, throughout this epistle, *works*, and not “good works” are mentioned. Wherever in other parts of the Scripture good works are spoken of, the necessity of them is always implied. Though there are twenty-two distinct senses given in the New Testament to the word **FAITH**, I think it is only used in one sense throughout this epistle; that is, the deep-founded conviction of the necessity of the Gospel covenant, and the firm assurance of its truth. When it is taken for undefined principle, or a mystic feeling, the foundation of error is laid.

Now trusting that you remember what was said of the occasion on which St. Paul wrote this epistle, these words will easily explain themselves; taken, as they ought to be, in connection with what has been said of the pride and prejudices of the Jews.

It will then appear that the word *faith*, throughout this epistle, means, generally, faith in the new covenant of grace under JESUS CHRIST, which was to embrace all the world; and *works*, the works of the law of Moses.

In the two first chapters St. Paul had enforced the doctrine, that both Jews and Gentiles, being equally under sin, (one refusing even to obey the moral law of Moses, in which they gloried, and the others shutting their eyes to the light of nature,) were both equally under the judgment of sin and of death: of sin, in consequence of perfect original righteousness being lost; and of death, in consequence of the doom pronounced upon all flesh, "dust thou art, and "unto dust thou shalt return." The epistle, therefore, was written to persuade and convince the Jews, that under the gospel all men, Jews and Gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised, bond and free, were to be called into the covenant of grace; become the heirs of God's gracious promises; and equally destined, by repentance from dead works, by a new faith and obedience, to happiness and immortality.

Therefore he says in this chapter, and in the words I have taken for the text, "Now "the *righteousness of God, without the law*, is "manifest, being witnessed by the *law and the*

*“prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ, by all and upon all that believe.”*

Nothing can be more clear and decisive than these words, when taken in conjunction with the course of argument before us. FAITH, in this epistle, is therefore used to denote the covenant of christian grace, in opposition to the works in which the Jews boasted, both ceremonial and moral.

When therefore we are said to be *justified* by faith, and by faith only, we are justified by CHRIST and not by Moses; we are justified, we are freely justified, by FAITH, NOT BY WORKS.

By the word “justified,” I understand a redemption from that judgment pronounced on all that live,—of sin and of death. From this plain statement, it appears, how clear it is, that we are “saved by faith.”

For without this (that is, the new covenant in JESUS CHRIST) we should have had neither knowledge or hope of eternal life.

But this knowledge makes our responsibility, as moral beings, far more awful; as it sets before us a state of eternal rewards and eternal punishments. The Gospel, which has brought these truths to light, requires such a firm assurance, such dispositions, and such practices, as become those who profess this

knowledge and this hope ; and the eternal portion with the blessed or the cursed will be according to the fruits which their knowledge, their faith, and their hope, have produced.

Such, in a few words, is my idea of the doctrines, concerning which so much has been said, of FAITH and WORKS.

Though the law of grace and mercy superseded that of WORKS; yet the law and the prophets, in the Jewish dispensation, served both to witness and to confirm these momentous truths, of the ulterior and immortal destination of man; but as his own inherent imperfections and abasement could not give or restore that perfection, in which as the image of GOD he was created; so neither could that, which was mortal and corruptible, be, by any effort of its own, absolved from the general doom of everlasting death.

Here then the *righteousness* of GOD is manifested; that power which human nature could not exert, that perfection which nothing human could restore, is freely given, and thus "imputed" to us, through JESUS CHRIST.

This, to the best of my understanding, is a brief explication of the text; and also a solution of some difficulties, which, dressed and swelled out in hard words, bewilder the senses more than they convince the understanding; I might well add, more than they



improve the faith, exalt the hope, or enlarge the charity of the christian.

Mankind, then, or rather human nature, could not be *justified*, in the sense in which, divested of all laboured distinctions, I have explained that word, either by the light of nature, or by the law of Moses. By what then? let the Apostle speak himself: "even by the **" FAITH of JESUS CHRIST,"** which was the means of restoring him to that righteousness in which he was created, to those hopes of immortality and happiness beyond the grave which he had forfeited.

In opposition to this plain and clear statement of what I consider to be St. Paul's doctrine, it will be probably asked, What then is the meaning of the "wrath of God?" Is this all that is meant, when we are commanded to "work out our salvation with "fear and trembling, and to flee from the "wrath to come?"

In answer to such questions I unequivocally answer, I am here only speaking of the christian doctrine as far as it is laid down in this epistle by St. Paul. I compare this part of the epistle with the original judgment denounced against man by his Creator, which is found in the Old Testament, **"DUST THOU  
"ART, AND UNTO DUST THOU SHALT  
"RETURN."**

To the doctrine of ulterior and eternal punishment I approach with awe : enough appears in the revealed word of God, enough through the visible darkness that rests on that fearful and mysterious gulph, to arrest the most thoughtless, and to appal the most hardened and impenitent.

But there is nothing said of this, I fearlessly assert, in the account of man's original condemnation ; nor do I think that St. Paul can be said to mean, in this chapter, any thing farther.

With respect to the idea presented in other parts of scripture, of which it is not necessary for me here to take notice, I will say this, that such descriptions are always held out, not as the punishment of original sin, but of ACTUAL wickedness.

I could earnestly beg all who hear me, to attend to this distinction. The most awful and terrible pictures of God's retributive justice always, in scripture, refer to cases of individual depravity, to crimes against the light of nature, and of the gospel.

He who hardened his heart in the day of worldly prosperity ; he who suffered the beggar to lie at his door unpitied, naked, and covered with sores, desiring to be fed with crumbs that fell from the rich man's table ; he it is, who, in another world, is described

as being in the place of torment. Those to whom Jesus cries, “depart from me, ye wicked,” are they, “who when he was sick relieved him not, when he was naked clothed him not, when he was in prison visited him not.” This punishment was for the individual crimes; and I boldly say, whatever system of human creeds it may shake, that there is not one passage in the gospel, in which the awfulness of eternal punishment is spoken of, without its being coupled with man’s individual offences, either against the light of nature, or of the gospel.

I have been the more earnest in pressing your attention to this point, because I think the want of attention to it has been the cause of much and dangerous error.

If the gospel says so, believe it: but if the gospel does not say so, then attribute it to what it ought to be ascribed,—the dreams and presumption of man.

I shall retract this instantly, if the contrary be clearly pointed out; but I stand upon scripture ground, and admit nothing as an argument but scripture proof.

As to my own interpretation of St. Paul’s doctrine in this place, I am by no means bold enough to say, that this view of the meaning of the text is to be considered as comprehending all that is most necessary for

a christian to believe on this point; yet I trust it goes so far as to clear the way for the consideration of other momentous topics.

I have thus endeavoured to lay down, in a manner as clear and explicit as I could, my opinion of the sense in which the words *faith*, *works*, and *justification*, are to be understood in this epistle. I do not say that my opinion is decisive, God forbid; but I think nothing can be more undeniable than this position, that where words are used, to which more than one idea may be affixed, I must *judge* with *my own understanding*, and not *with the understanding of another*; and I do assert, that if we could once persuade christian people, catholic or protestant, churchmen or dissenters, to say, "this is my view of the doctrines of the christian faith," instead of saying "*this is the christian faith*;" it would be of more service to truth, than all the long and laborious institutes that ever were or ever will be written upon that Gospel which was preached to the poor.

This then, as far as it goes, is my opinion; and I trust also is the opinion of the church to which we belong. Here is the conviction of sin; our helplessness by nature; and the necessity of a Saviour, and a revelation from heaven, which only can console and enlighten, which only can assist and save.

It may not be improper to state here, that when the great reformers of the church spoke of works, as St. Paul confined his meaning to the works of the Jewish law; so they in general meant chiefly those works, in the performance of which the catholic church placed a MERIT, as the Jews did in the rites and ceremonies of Moses. These works of the catholic church were not confined to works of moral goodness and charity, but meant works of self-mortification, which was called "penance;" travels or pilgrimages to places celebrated for the presence of particular saints; fasts, and other injunctions. These were called "good works:" and against these, and the idea of any MERIT in them, and afterwards extending the principle against any *merit whatever* in mere human actions, the stern reformers of the sixteenth century were deservedly very pointed. In this spirit\* the articles of our own church were composed. In the like manner St. Paul speaks also of the moral works of the Jewish law; and CHRIST also says he came not to de-

\* All works done before justification have the nature of sin; that is, of that general condemnation under sin, in which all mankind were involved; and any idea of *merit* in human actions strikes at the root of the very first principle of the new covenant. The necessity of them is proved by our Saviour's commands, and faith is only complete by them.

stroy, but to fulfil; to fulfil the prophecies, as well as to put moral virtues on a purer and firmer foundation. The morality of human actions, and the moral part of the Jewish law, was so far of no avail as to be in themselves totally inefficient to our justification, which can rest upon no other foundation than that of God's grace and mercy.

Through a Redeemer only we can lift up our eyes, "from whence cometh our help;" through a Redeemer only, earth is connected with heaven; and our abased mortal condition in this life cheered by the promises and views of another.

Oh! then let us pass on, through the days of our appointed pilgrimage, if not in perfect agreement as to points of doctrine, yet in peace and charity; let us brush away the cobwebs of human contention; let us be christians in heart, if we do not all agree in the same mode of worship, or in the same interpretation of words: let us think of the beam in our own eye, before we attempt to pull the mote out of our brother's eye: let us put on the humility of sincere disciples of Jesus: let us cherish the feelings of christian love to all the world, and not pride ourselves in the narrow spirit, and confined and contracted feelings, of a peculiar people, such as St. Paul reprov'd in the converted Jews. Thus putting away all "envy, and wrath,

“and malice, and evil speaking,” let us seek the truth with our hearts: let us walk according to the best of our knowledge and belief, without condemning others, which upon protestant, and above all, upon christian principles, we have no authority to do; and remember chiefly, that such conduct ill becomes those who profess their infirmities and ignorance on the one hand, whilst they demand obedience to their own opinions on the other.

Let us look to the great points in which christians agree; not to the smaller ones, concerning which they differ. Let us lift our eyes, not to the veering cloud, but to the immutable and glorious sun. The time will come when his light shall fail, and the earth pass away as a scroll; “these will perish, but “thou, O LORD, shalt endure; thy years “shalt not fail.”

The soul of man, which eternal love has redeemed from sin and death, shall also exist, when the wreck of worlds, like the clouds of yesterday, is passed away. With assured faith, with lively hope, let us look forward to this period, in which all shadows of dissensions shall be removed; when we shall no longer see as through a glass darkly; and when one eternal and glorious light shall be shed on the works and the ways of God.

Now to GOD the Father, &c.

## NOTES

## TO SERMONS I. AND II.



IT appears to me *unscriptural*, ever to apply, as is commonly done, by sincere and excellent men, to the word *Faith*, the adjuncts which belong to Hope.

There are "faith without wavering;"—"assurance of faith;"—"faith unfeigned;"—"precious faith;"—"holy faith;"—"faith that sanctifies;"—"faith that justifies;"—and "faith that saves;"—and also "a faith that DOES NOT SAVE;"—but there is no such expression as "lively faith" to be found in the Gospel. The only legitimate use of the word *lively*, as applied to faith, is to distinguish it from *dead* faith; that is, faith without fruits or works, as accurately described in our Church Homily. As this principle proceeds, it assumes a new and more animated character, and then it becomes Christian HOPE; to which the word "lively" is, with stricter propriety, applied in the Gospel: and which is never applied to faith. If "lively" be applied to faith in this restricted and legitimate sense, it can never mislead; but as it is often used, it denotes only the warmth of the writer's fancy. So also the "spirit of faith" is used in opposition to "dead" faith, as the same combination is in scripture generally employed to denote the existence of any subject. "Spirit of antichrist;"—"spirit of council;"—"spirit of error;"—"spirit of fear;"—"spirit of jealousy;"—"spirit of truth;"—"spirit of slumber;"—"SPIRIT OF FAITH;" &c.



Nothing can be more philosophically or logically just than the association of the Apostle,—*faith, hope, charity.*

Quitting the guidance of the WRITTEN WORD, the idea excited by any given expression may be expanded to suit almost any interpretation; it is then, however, no longer the *faith* of the scripture.

The definition of faith I take from the scripture only, as the BASIS of all christian gifts and graces; of christian hope, and of christian charity.

But in order to prevent misunderstanding respecting the meaning of the words, I think it necessary to add, in this place, that where I have used the word FAITH, as I conceive it to be understood in the Epistle to the Romans, I mean, the deep conviction of the utter impossibility of any JUSTIFICATION BEFORE GOD, save that of FAITH IN CHRIST, in opposition to either Jewish law, or heathen morals, or any other plea. This word, so defined, I have used in one place, as I think St. Paul has done more than once in this epistle, to denote simply the covenant of immortality through JESUS CHRIST, in opposition to the covenant of works under Mosca.

The word justification I have used in *two* senses. First, *that justification*, by which all men, in consequence of the sufferings and the merits of CHRIST, are absolved from the penalty of Adam's original transgression: And secondly, (as in the note, page 22,) *personal justification* before GOD, which follows our own repentance and obedience, rendered acceptable by the merits and sufferings of CHRIST.

#### P. 10.—NEITHER BELIEVE ME.

My abhorrence of the language which is used by some, but by none so much as the Calvinists, has induced me to speak with diffidence when I say, "neither believe me;" meaning, of course, "neither believe me" farther than the scriptures are my express warrant.

Christianity and Truth are constantly identified with Calvinism, by Calvinistic writers ; so that none can be a christian, except he uses John Calvin's green and distorting spectacles. " Calvinism, or in other words, pure and primitive christianity," says the author of a book called " THE CHURCH ! " This assumption of infallibility is much stronger among those " Papists " who have no Pope, than among those who have. I cordially join with the same author in sentiment, when he says, " HEAVENLY birth must have a HEAVENLY mind ! " Amen ! Amen !—but would he have been willing to try John Calvin, the author of this creed (which he calls pure christianity ! ) by this unerring test ? To me he might as well speak of Bishop Bonner's " pure and " primitive Christianity," and try him by his " heavenly " actions, and heavenly mind : " Bonner " in burning " quoted Calvin's example.

The amiable historian of the WALDENSES conceives, that after fifteen hundred years of ignorance, in the Christian world, God vouchsafed a supernatural " insight " into the knowledge of pure and primitive Christianity to Calvin ; but candidly admits that God, at the same time, gave him " NO INSIGHT " at all into a knowledge of its disposition and duties. Now, upon this candid confession, it must appear much more likely, that God gave him no insight into its doctrines, dispositions, or duties ! Oh ! no ! no ! I would not dare deny, that God might have given an " insight " to Fenelon the Catholic, Melancton the Lutheran, Penn the Quaker, Joseph Stennet the Baptist, John Wesley the Methodist ;—but not to BISHOP BONNER, or JOHN CALVIN ! !

# CORRIGENDA.

Page 2, for " true or false," read " false, or partly true."  
7, for " material matter," read " material points."

## SERMON III.

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ROMANS V. 1.

*Therefore being justified BY FAITH, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**I** Proceed in my explanation of this important Epistle; relying that what has been before said of the occasion on which it appears to have been written, and the description of persons to which it was more immediately addressed, is duly impressed on your minds.

In stating that this epistle was written on a particular occasion, I by no means intend to affirm that the Epistles in general are not substantially necessary for christian instruction, in all ages. I have already noticed that this epistle was perhaps the most important of all the epistles; yet it cannot be denied, that they were accommodated to the peculiar circumstances of the infant church, which required apostolic direction; otherwise, indeed, the epistle to the Romans might have been as well addressed to the Corin

thians, and the epistle to the Corinthians to the Romans, if they embraced only topics which alike referred to either of these people.

In my last discourse, I particularly spoke of FAITH and WORKS: now GOOD works are not mentioned in the epistle, only works. Of the necessity of *good* works, as the fruits of faith, the whole scripture is full; but the most convincing passage, and which clearly explains the difference between works and *good* works, is in the Epistle to the Ephesians, 2d chap. "For by grace ye are saved THROUGH FAITH, and NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast: for we are his workmanship, created in CHRIST to GOOD WORKS," &c. It will appear plain to every capacity, that the "works" alluded to in the ninth verse must be the works of the law, in which the Jews TRUSTED; and not "good works," christian works, without which faith itself were dead. If it were requisite to point out the necessity of these works, I need only mention further, Colossians x. 10, "that we might walk worthy of the LORD, unto all pleasing, being FRUITFUL in EVERY GOOD WORK!" and 2d Thessalonians, ii. 27, "stablish you in every GOOD WORK."

Having so far, I trust, rendered St. Paul's meaning clear, I hasten to consider the other

objections of the Jews to St. Paul's doctrine; that Christianity was to be universal, and that the promises of immortality, through justification by faith, were to be extended to all nations on the face of the earth, whilst they were nationally rejected, and considered no longer to be a peculiar people. In the third chapter St. Paul opposes the argument, that they were justified by their own righteousness, and the works of the law. They now lay their claims to preference, as being descended from Abraham, because to Abraham, and to his descendants in the flesh, the promises were made. "What shall we say that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, has found?" Verse 1.

The fourth chapter is employed by the Apostle, in shewing the Jews the weakness of this objection; and that so far from proving their *exclusive* claim, it proves directly the contrary; as the promise to Abraham was NOT that a particular people should be distinguished as his children, but, that "he should be the father of many nations," and that all nations on the earth in his seed should be blessed! He himself was not blessed on account of the *works of the law*, for the law was not yet given. Throughout the whole chapter, the Apostle

proves that Abraham was justified by "FAITH," and trust in God; and that on this account, by the promises to which they boastingly refer, he was to be considered as the father of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews; as the spiritual progenitor of ALL THE FAITHFUL upon earth. Having thus shewn the Jews that they had no reason to glory as being the children of Abraham, the fifth chapter begins with sentiments which naturally follow from what went before. "Therefore being justified by FAITH, we have peace with GOD." That is, notwithstanding every boastful plea of the Jews, the Gentiles (and the argument embraces all mankind) are reconciled to GOD, and made heirs of immortality, solely through the ATONEMENT and MERITS of JESUS CHRIST, none by the works of the law; none by being the descendants of Abraham; none by any moral or merciful acts of their own; but all wholly and entirely by the "GREAT SACRIFICE ONCE MADE." "For GOD commendeth his love to us (the Apostle proceeds) in that whilst we were yet SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US; much more being now JUSTIFIED by HIS BLOOD, we shall be saved from wrath THROUGH HIM."—"For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to GOD

“ by the death of his Son, much more being  
 “ reconciled we shall be saved by his life,  
 “ and not only so, but we also joy in God  
 “ through our LORD JESUS CHRIST, by  
 “ whom we have now received ATONE-  
 “ MENT.” Verse 11.

Having before stated how vain were all pleas which the Jews could make, and that the Gentiles were now justified, without compliance with the law of Moses, the Apostle thus speaks of the great doctrine of THE ATONEMENT ; which word, in the original, implies reconciliation or absolution. It is impossible, that any words, in so short a compass, could be chosen to set so fully before us (as the consequence of what had been said before) the circumstance; that, as “ in Adam ALL DIE, even so  
 “ in CHRIST should ALL BE MADE alive !” That being all under the condemnation of sin unto death ; through CHRIST, himself dying and rising again, suffering and triumphant, ALL were enabled to “ joy in God.” The Apostle here goes back to describe the occasion of man’s fall from that “ righteousness,” in which “ as the IMAGE OF  
 “ God,” he was created.

“ Wherefore as by one man (Adam) sin  
 “ entered into the world, and DEATH BY  
 “ SIN,” so “ DEATH passed upon all men,

“for that all have sinned.” Verse 12. “DEATH (he says) reigned from Adam to “Moses.” Verse 14. Now all men sinned as well as died, “from Adam to Moses;” but till there was a positive law which forbade sin, it was not (the Apostle says) “*imputed*.” Nevertheless DEATH reigned over all, as the judgment of GOD; and DEATH is said to have reigned to Moses, because the LAW GIVEN TO MOSES, and REVEALED BY GOD, was the first step made manifest of that great and merciful dispensation of the ALMIGHTY, by which, in the end, “DEATH WAS TO “BE SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY!!” GOD indeed made the covenant with Adam, and revealed his design more fully to Abraham; and CHRIST himself says, “your “father Abraham rejoiced to SEE my “day;” but the knowledge of either was not publicly imparted till the law of Moses. In this manner, then, the law was the first step that prepared the way to the knowledge of the immortal destiny of man.

As Moses himself only saw, in obscure and distant view, the promised land; so, though immortality might not have been revealed to him, (as there is no express mention of it in the first five books of the Bible, except obscurely in Leviticus,) yet the law was “the school-master,” as the Apostle says,



"to bring us to CHRIST ;" the law was part, though distant and dark, of the great revelation, which was fulfilled completely by the atonement for sin, and the resurrection, from the grave, of JESUS CHRIST. Therefore, "as by the OFFENCE of one " JUDGEMENT came upon ALL to CON- " DEMNATION, even so by the righteous- " ness of ONE came the TRUE GIFT upon " all men, UNTO JUSTIFICATION of LIFE." Verse 18.—I am here speaking of DEATH, which appears not to have been a necessary consequence of man's " original creation."

The Apostle, in this chapter, is speaking of DEATH, as he had before spoken of SIN. Sin I should consider as that dominion of EVIL, throughout the world, witnessed in sights and scenes of various calamities, and which have their origin in our abased and corrupted nature. Sorrow also walks the earth with death and sin, and these send up to the throne of God a mingled and unceasing sound from earth, (the " deep unutterable " groan,") and mark the passage of its short-lived inhabitants with blood and tears.

When it is said, " the law entered, that " the offence might abound;" it must appear, I hope, plain, from what has been said, that the knowledge of the transgression came by the law, and that the offence

would "abound;" that is become greater, as the law against it was more positive and clear. In the same sense, and with the same turn of argument, St Paul concludes his eloquent and pathetic epistle to the Corinthians. "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who hath given us the victory, [over death and sin,] through JESUS CHRIST our LORD"

As this fifth chapter of the Epistle of the Romans gives the clearest account of the consequences of the fall of man, without thinking it necessary to insist on that complete, entire, and deep-rooted *depravity*, (a word not found in scripture,) which some sincere and pious men think essential to Christianity, enough will appear to convince us, that man in his fallen state is "far gone" from original righteousness, as far indeed as "the image of God" from dust and ashes; as far as corruption from incorruption; as far as sin, and sorrow, and death, from purity, and happiness, and immortality. It is by the "free gift of God, and through the grace of JESUS CHRIST, and "Him crucified," and by these alone, that we become "more than conquerors;" and this grace was not, under the gospel, to be restricted and confined to a particular

people, as to the Jews when under their law; for language cannot more strongly express the contrary, than the 18th verse does. “Likewise, then, as by the offence of ONE the judgement came upon ALL MEN to condemnation, even so by the RIGHTEOUSNESS of ONE came the true gift upon ALL MEN unto justification of life.” With this consoling and animating truth, at the end of the chapter, St. Paul sums up what he had before said: and if so clear, so strong, so full, and so positive a statement against all exclusive claims to particular redemption, which was addressed to the Jews, peremptorily, and on purpose to convince them of the vanity of all exclusive pretensions; if a statement so decisive, from St. Paul himself, fail to persuade Christians that the Gospel was to be universal, not partial; then they “will not be persuaded, though one came from the dead.” This, however, is their concern; they must judge of the Scripture with their own understanding, and we with ours. But I would earnestly entreat them to reflect, how dire must be that SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST, if they claim his *immediate inspiration* to *harden* them in that *uncharitableness*, which his whole Gospel condemns!! I confine what remains of this discourse to some general

reflections, which naturally arise from so a momentous a subject.

It will appear evident from the whole, that "being justified by faith," we have peace with God. Faith, I have already said, is a firm reliance on, and trust in, the merits of CHRIST alone for salvation, nor in the law of MOSES, nor in any works of our own; and FAITH is sometimes used to signify the Gospel itself. This is the free gift of GOD; this is the grace, wherein as Christians we now stand, and have "peace with God." But St. Paul asks, in the beginning of the sixth chapter, "If this be so, shall we sin then, that grace may abound?" The answer is positive and peremptory, and which there can be no gainsaying,—"God forbid!" On the contrary we are not only here, but in every part of the scripture, at the risk of our eternal salvation, at the risk of forfeiting all the privileges. CHRIST died to procure, and at the risk of incurring a far more awful and terrible responsibility, counselled to "walk in newness of life, and "worthy the vocation wherewith we are "called." I shall not point out how this may best be done, but leave you to learn it from your BIBLES; and here only endeavour to awaken your attention to the bless-

sings, which, through the Gospel, are now freely set before all. I wish, then, that what I could say might make an impression on you, holy and powerful as the subject.

**CHRISTIANS! BROTHERS!** think, for a moment think, with renewed trust, and joy, and gratitude, of the situation in which man, the child of dust and ashes, now stands, and that in which he stood before the light of revelation was fully displayed. No longer ignorant, forlorn, or hopeless, in a vast incomprehensible universe, where his momentary existence is a miracle; and where he perceives neither relation or connection, object or end, between his own soul, and the unknown stupendous scene which surrounds him;—no longer confined in his views to the sod and the worm, and forgetfulness of the grave, to which his steps day by day, instant by instant, decline;—enlightened by the Gospel, he looks up to Heaven, he feels a glorious connection and interest with things beyond the bounds and the ken of mortality.

If a mournful thought obtrudes, when he thinks of the dust to which he and all he loved on earth, is going down, he knows even the grave shall not hide him from the face of that God, under whose eye all worlds are rolling in light. Conscious

now of his glorious destination, he endeavours to perform the part required, however imperfectly, of a being so VISITED, SO INSTRUCTED, and SO REDEEMED! Sustained by faith, and enlivened by hope, and warmed by charity, he has his sojourn here for a season. He trusts not in any works of his own, for he knows and feels how imperfect, and without God's assistance, how helpless, are the best. He has no other trust but in the mercy of his REDEEMER! Through him, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, he offers up to the Throne of Grace his patient sorrows, his meek solicitude, his chastened and holy joy, his earnest though imperfect obedience, his humbled heart, and his publick and silent prayers! From Him alone he implores that justification, which he seeks in vain elsewhere; and that "peace which the world cannot give!" And thus only he presumes to hope that his sincere repentance, not his imperfect obedience, may be accepted, through JESUS CHRIST, his REDEEMER.

Upon the whole survey of St. Paul's doctrine as far as we have gone, I think we may divide the chief grounds of dispute and animosities between the Jews and Gentiles into three principal objections on the

part of the Jews. First, in their considering the Gentiles, as utterly unworthy of being associated with themselves ; and secondly, if their admission were necessary under the New Covenant, that then they ought to comply with the law of Moses, and also to acknowledge the pre-eminence, of the Jews, as the descendants from Abraham ; and thirdly, if the converted Jews and Gentiles were equally admitted, that still the blessings of the Gospel should be confined to a chosen and selected few.

On the latter subject, the Apostle has expressed himself as clearly as words can express his meaning. " By the righteousness of one, the *free gift* came upon ALL MEN, to the justification of life." The last subject of predestination and partial election he enters on more particularly in the eighth chapter.

But if what the Apostle of CHRIST has said be clear, let us ask, " Men, and brethren, what shall we do ?"

Oh ! let us not be CHRISTIANS IN NAME, and still JEWS IN HEART ! But GOD grant, that all who with sincerity and humility, read his holy word, may be led into the way everlasting. Now, &c.

## SERMON IV.

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ROMANS viii. 29.

*Whom he did foreknow, he also did  
predestinate.*

**M**Y object in endeavouring to render the chief arguments of this epistle more familiar to you, is not to enter into a regular explanation of all the subjects it embraces, (which in so short a compass would be impossible,) but to point out the leading heads, the general connection; and more especially, to call your attention to those passages which, being taken apart, and viewed separately from the main argument, have been the occasion of much misunderstanding and uncharitableness.



In the sixth and seventh chapters, and in part of the eighth, the Apostle obviates certain objections brought against his doctrines ; as if he had taught, that grace now abounding, those under the gospel had a liberty to sin ; and he also teaches, that justification, without works of the law, does not render the moral law useless.

As the "body" of original sin is now destroyed, we ought to avoid all *actual* sin. "For we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of SIN is DEATH, but the gift of GOD is ETERNAL LIFE, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD." The Apostle had hitherto spoken of sin, in consequence of which the "condemnation passed upon all men." In the seventh chapter, he speaks of the fruits, and the triumph, of the spirit ; concluding, that through faith in CHRIST we are justified, and delivered. "Oh ! wretched man," he exclaims, as in despair, who "shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" and instantly, animated and ardent, with a view of the Christian's last and glorious triumph, breaks out into expressions of hope and rapture, "I thank GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD."

The eighth chapter begins naturally from what had been before explained. There

is no 'condemnation' to those that are in CHRIST JESUS. But remember, here is a positive and absolute condition respecting this condemnation; there is no longer this condemnation in CHRIST "TO THOSE WHO WALK AFTER THE SPIRIT, AND NOT AFTER THE FLESH!" In the second verse he says, "The law of the spirit in CHRIST JESUS has made me free from the law of sin, and of death!" And whom was it that this law of the spirit, this clear revelation of God's eternal purpose, was to embrace? The law of Moses was confined, as we have seen, to a particular people, in a particular portion of the globe; was it to be so with the law of CHRIST?

The whole course of this epistle, and the arguments against the Jews, as far as we have gone, shew it to be directly the contrary; and after what I have here said, I would beg of you, at your leisure, to read over the epistle as far as the eighth chapter; and with a very little attention you will perceive that the object of the general argument tends to prove what I have stated. I shall pass over what is said of "*groaning in the spirit*," as it will be the subject of a particular discourse; and proceed to that remarkable and disputed passage, which you have no doubt often heard repeated. "All things work together for

"good to THEM THAT ARE CALLED AC-  
 "CORDING TO HIS PURPOSE. FOR WHOM  
 "HE DID FOREKNOW, HE ALSO DID PRE-  
 "DESTINATE, &c. MOREOVER, WHOM HE  
 "DID PREDESTINATE, THEM HE ALSO  
 "CALLED; AND WHOM HE CALLED, THEM  
 "HE ALSO JUSTIFIED. WHOM HE JUS-  
 "TIFIED, THEM HE ALSO GLORIFIED."  
 Verse 30. Who were these, then, whom  
 God foreknew, and predestinated, and called,  
 and justified, and glorified? Were they the  
 converted Jews only? So they seemed to ima-  
 gine; but the whole epistle is against this  
 supposition. Shall we then admit, that the  
*principle* remained of *confinement* and *select-*  
*ion*, and that only the *persons* were changed;  
 that the Gospel was *individually partial*,  
 as the law was *naturally*? Then St. Paul  
 palpably contradicts his *own direct* assertion;  
 for he had said expressly in the fifth  
 chapter, as we have observed, "as by  
 "the offence of one judgement came  
 "UPON ALL, SO BY THE RIGHTEOUS-  
 "NESS OF ONE THE FREE GIFT CAME  
 "UPON ALL MEN TO JUSTIFICATION OF  
 "LIFE."

If then the "free gift came upon ALL,"  
 are all men to be "glorified?" That we  
 dare not say. Who then were foreknown?  
 Particular individuals, predestined to this

end before they were born, and elected partially, in all ages, from the great mass of mankind? Who shall enter "into the councils of the Most High," and so assert? And when we feel that such assertion is contrary to every idea we can form of a just as well as merciful Being, who shall boldly say we oppose God, because we oppose such opinions, which every uncorrupted feeling of the heart, which every dictate of the understanding, which the whole tenour of the Gospel, which JESUS CHRIST himself, (I do not fear to say,) and which all the general arguments of St. Paul in this very epistle, contradict.

It was God's "*eternal purpose*," then, to call the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, to the privileges of the Gospel, without any predetermined preference in favour of individuals, to glorify all those who should be found righteous in their generation. How God's foreknowledge can consist with man's free-will, is not my purpose to enquire. That is a question of "vain philosophy," against which we are so often warned by the Apostles: we have nothing to do but with the meaning of St. Paul in this passage.

I admit instantly, that the feelings of the human heart, and the dictates of human

understanding, are not to be appealed to, if any position be proved from the unerring word of God. But before we can admit that it is so, it must be made to appear consistent with, and not contradictory to, the **WHOLE** word of God.

I hope I have already proved it to be in contradiction of St. Paul's own arguments, even in this epistle. Now suppose we could come to no explanation of it at all, should we abide by this one text, in opposition to the whole course of the Gospel, or place it among those things which St. Peter said were "hard to be understood." But if we come to a clear explanation, and that explanation be consistent with St. Paul's argument, and with the *whole tenour* of the word of God; what must we think of the vain pride of that philosophy, which can build up, with learning and eloquence, a **BABEL** of IMAGININGS; and then asserting a claim to infallibility, affirm that this human structure is the work of God; and call us, at the risk of our salvation, "to fall down and worship;" not, the "gold and precious stones" of the Gospel, but the "*straw and stubble*" of human philosophy!! The humble christian, equally regardless of dreams or dogmas, takes his stand on the word of God, and adheres to

that only. He may be in error, but all he asks is, in what manner he shall be best enabled to follow that rule; and the answer is, though he should not confine his attention to *one text*, but if that appears difficult, see what light may be thrown upon it by the other and clearer parts of scripture, and above all attend to the words of our Saviour himself, for in him was the "FULNESS of the GODHEAD."

If there can be yet a doubt with respect to the meaning of this passage, a comparison with the Epistle to the Ephesians on the very same subject must remove it. The same "eternal purpose" of God is spoken of, and on account of the very same people. The whole passage is a perfect explanation of St. Paul's meaning in the epistle. "The mystery, &c. which in  
 " other ages was not known unto the sons  
 " of men, is *now revealed* unto his holy  
 " apostles and prophets by the Spirit;  
 " that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs,  
 " and of the SAME BODY, and partakers of  
 " his PROMISE IN CHRIST by the Gospel."  
 And again in the same passage, "that *now*  
 " unto the principalities and powers in  
 " heavenly places might be known by  
 " the Church the manifold wisdom of God,  
 " according to the eternal purpose which he

“purposed in CHRIST JESUS our LORD.” Here the same ETERNAL PURPOSE is spoken of, and the same application made, to those who were to be called out of all nations. Both passages throw a light on each other ; nor can any thing like “individual predes-  
“tination” be inferred from either.

In the account which CHRIST gives of the awful circumstances of the LAST DAY, there is, in my opinion, a still more complete illustration of that kind of predestination, of which St. Paul here speaks : “Come, ye  
“blessed children of my Father, receive the  
“kingdom PREPARED for you from the  
“BEGINNING of the world.” It is unfortunate for human pride and human presumption, that “personal predestination” must render vain CHRIST’s assertions of his own justice.

Who were the blessed children of the Father called to receive the kingdom prepared for them from the beginning ? JESUS CHRIST shall answer : “THE RIGHTEOUS.” And who were the righteous for whom the kingdom was prepared from the “BEGIN-  
“NING OF THE WORLD ?” JESUS CHRIST shall answer : those, as we have before observed, who when “he was an hungered, gave  
“him meat ; when he was thirsty, gave him  
“drink ; or when he was a stranger, took

“ him in; when he was sick, visited him;  
 “ or when he was in prison, came unto him.”  
 If this were not sufficient, let us attend to  
 the voice of Revelation from FIRST to LAST.

What were the tidings of the angels who  
 announced from heaven the dawn of salva-  
 tion? “ Behold, I bring you glad tidings of  
 “ great joy, which shall be to ALL PEOPLE.”  
 What was the affecting address of our  
 Saviour? “ Come unto me ALL ye that  
 “ labour and are heavy laden, and I will  
 “ give you rest.” What was the signifi-  
 cation of the parable of the wedding sup-  
 per, when the marriage was furnished  
 with guests from the highways; and when  
 he only was cast out, who had not on the  
 the wedding garment? which cannot be un-  
 derstood otherwise than of a person who  
 has the *name*, without the heart and dispo-  
 sition, of a CHRISTIAN. Nor can the  
 furnishing the wedding with guests from  
 the highways and hedges be considered  
 otherwise than as GOD’s “ ETERNAL PUR-  
 “ POSE” to call all nations. After the Holy  
 Ghost, the promised “ COMFORTER,” had  
 descended on the disciples, was the gift  
 confined to the apostle and Jewish converts?  
 Hear St. Luke’s account in the tenth chapter  
 of the Acts: “ and they of the circumcision  
 “ which believed, were astonished, as many



“ as came, with Peter, because that on the  
 “ Gentiles was also poured out the gift of  
 “ the Holy Ghost.”

It appears that the apostles were not till this time convinced of the great design of CHRIST'S coming—the cause of universal redemption. St. Paul was supernaturally converted for this purpose ; “ to be the “ chosen vessel” to preach CHRIST CRUCI-  
 “ FIED” to the Gentiles ; and he means *by the Gentiles* the whole world. And this was GOD'S eternal purpose, “ that in the end  
 “ all things should work together for good  
 “ to them that love him ; and that these  
 “ at last should be ONE FOLD and ONE  
 “ SHEPHERD.”

Such is the general testimony of the written Word of GOD, in confirmation of one great truth. Shall we take St. Paul's words in this place, in opposition to the united voice of the Old and New Testament, and in *contradiction* to his own arguments ; or shall we admit, which I think we must be compelled to do, that the whole scheme of human redemption was meant to be *universal*, not *particular* ; and that when St. Paul speaks of those whom God foreknew, and justified, and glorified, he speaks of all Christians in all ages, who, through GOD'S assistance, having kept faith, should

attain that inheritance which was laid up for them in heaven, and “ *which fadeth not away.*”

All the passages in scripture which may be quoted as favourable to personal predestination, if duly considered, will be found only applicable to the circumstances I have mentioned. The most particular is in the first of Timothy. “ Who hath called us “ with a holy calling, according to his own “ purpose, and the grace which was given “ in CHRIST JESUS, before the world began; “ and is now made manifest by the appearance of CHRIST, who had ABOLISHED “ DEATH, and brought life and immortality “ to light, through the Gospel, whereof “ I am appointed a preacher, and a “ teacher to the Gentiles.”

The first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians relates to the same purpose. “ According as he hath chosen us before “ the foundation of the world.—Having “ predestinated us unto the adoption of “ children, by JESUS CHRIST.” That, in the dispensation of JESUS, he might “ gather together in one ALL THINGS in “ CHRIST, which are in Heaven, and which “ are in earth.”

The word *predestination* is only found in two chapters of the Epistles, and not in

the four Gospels at all ! These passages, and others which might be brought, so far from establishing *personal* predestination, only confirm what I have before said of God's eternal purpose, that all things " should " work together for good, and the sound of " salvation go forth UNTO ALL LANDS."

But granting that some passages might bear another construction, (that of *particular predestination*,) it must be laid down as a rule, in difficult texts, that the interpretation should be always taken which is agreeable to *many passages*, rather than that which is agreeable to *a few*. And it must be obvious, that those things which are most essential to salvation, are, *for that very reason*, most clearly laid down ; and that where there is any *obscurity*, that point is *not necessary for salvation*.

I shall on Sunday next enter into this subject, as far as it regards personal election, more particularly ; and I now leave what has been said to your reflections ; hoping you will always be ready to abide by what shall appear to be the WORD OF GOD, not by what is positively pronounced by erring and uncharitable men.

The more you study the *general* meaning of scripture, the more you will be convinced of the truth, the soberness, the wisdom, and the harmony of the whole ;

and I do hope, also, that you will be more and more attached to that communion of christians, unto which you were baptised ; and that church of CHRIST, in which your fathers and mothers died ; which, whilst it grants, readily and cheerfully, the *rights of conscience* to all who dissent, claims only assent to its own articles so far and no farther, than they can be proved consistent with, and evidently deduced from, the word of God.

CHRIST himself says, "you believe in God, believe also in me."

This, I trust, we may do, without thinking it necessary to *believe* in predestination and election, in the sense generally attributed to those words. The predestined constitute the Church, the apostolic assembly of the faithful, in all ages. To this Church, reformed from all errors and abuses, which will not abide the test of the scriptures, we trust, we belong. Some have been so bold, might we not say blasphemous, as to affirm *that* to be the Gospel, which the Gospel in direct words contradicts. We have been told, that the promises of CHRIST contain neither "*ifs*" or *buts*!!" \* Oh ! ignorance and presumption ! that very Gos-

\* The promises of the Gospel, according to John Calvin, may have no "*ifs*" and "*buts*;" but I think that

pel says to that very man, and to all who believe the assertions of such men, "*This people draw nigh to me with their mouths,*" and honour me with THEIR LIPS, BUT "their heart is far from me. BUT,—BUT "in vain do they worship me, teaching for "doctrines the commandments of men!" John xv. 8, 9. JESUS CHRIST says also, chapter xiii. 17, "If ye know these things, "happy are ye IF ye do them." No two words in the whole Bible could be found, so unfortunate for this man's "assurance;" and it almost might appear a judgment on him for his presumption, in selecting those expressions which God so positively and directly turns against him, both in letter and in sentiment.

This is a specimen of what we are to trust to, if we leave the language or the general spirit of the word of truth. May GOD ALMIGHTY, of his grace, so direct us to adhere to it, that when the last trump shall wake us from the bed of death, we may be found among the company of the faithful; and to whatever communion of Christian worship we belong, may we "see the things "which belong to our peace, and hold the

Dr. Hawker will not in future venture to assert, that the Gospel according to JESUS CHRIST has no "*ifs*" or "*buts*."

“ faith in unity of spirit among ourselves, in  
“ the bond of peace with others, and in  
“ righteousness of life towards God.”  
To whom with the Father, &c.

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## NOTES

### TO SERMONS III. AND IV.

I Have a book, sanctioned by many respectable names, as containing the genuine gospel-doctrine, in which the passage from St. Paul, "as in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all be made alive," is thus printed—"As in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall ALL (THE ELECT) be made alive."

Any thing might be proved by thus daringly altering the word of GOD, and making it speak our opinions, instead of submitting our opinions to that ; and Mahomet might have proved his divine mission in the same manner. "As in Adam all die, even so in CHRIST shall all (who say there is one God, and Mahomet is his prophet) be made alive."

What must we think of any set of human opinions, when recourse must be had to such means to prove them ?

I beg it again to be decidedly understood, by all who cast their eyes over these pages, that I condemn no man, for not believing my interpretation, or any interpretation, except that of his own understanding or conscience. But when I say, "neither will they believe, if one arise from the dead," I speak of the pointed and positive words of the Apostle only. For instance ; if when the Apostle says, "THE JUSTIFICATION CAME UPON ALL MEN ;" any uninspired person, in direct opposition, asserts, the justification "DID NOT" come upon all men ! then, I say, that person will not be persuaded, "though one rose from the dead :". And if he boasts, that, in OPPOSITION TO THE APOSTLE, in asserting this, he has "the EXTRAORDINARY inspiration of the Holy Ghost," I beg him to reflect whether he may not be guilty of a "sin against the Holy Ghost," in pleading, presumptuously, the dictates of that Spirit against any positive truth which that Spirit had declared.

## SERMON V.

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ROMANS ix. 11.

*That the purpose of God according to ELECTION might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth.*

**I** HAVE purposely divided this disputed subject into two parts; that I might call your attention more particularly to those expressions, which seem at first view, in a more positive manner, to point to the doctrines of personal and individual election; and which have, on that account, been often triumphantly brought forward.

The names of Esau and of Jacob are specified in the chapter from whence the text is taken, and therefore let us see what this circumstance proves.



If it is taken from the general course of argument, and considered independently, and by itself, without regard to what went before, undoubtedly it must appear, that *partial*, and even *personal*, election must take place; and that the ALMIGHTY GOD is, for no other reason than his good-will and pleasure, “a respecter of persons;” though St. Paul had before told us he was not. Is GOD, then, a “respecter of persons?”

It is undoubtedly said, “Jacob have I *loved*, and Esau have I *hated*!” Stronger words could not have been found; and the history of the Old Testament shews that Jacob was that descendant of Abraham, whom GOD favoured; as the nation of the Jews was that nation, on the whole face of the globe, to whom alone “his oracles” were committed.”

I shall, therefore, call your attention to this subject more particularly. It never was denied, that the Old Testament was a *partial* revelation of GOD’s will; partiality, or exclusive predilection, appears upon the very face of it, in regard to NATIONS, to PERSONS, and to THINGS.

If there be any meaning or connection in the arguments of St. Paul, this partiality was, under the new and more complete covenant of JESUS CHRIST, to be done

away ; under which he only, whether bond-man or free, circumcised or uncircumcised, Jew or Gentile, " should *be accepted*, who " held the faith in *righteousness*."

Why, then, are the names of Jacob and Esau specifically introduced on this occasion ? Because St. Paul wishes to convince the Jews, by a positive and direct appeal to those very writings, on which their partiality to themselves, and their prejudice against other nations, was founded. I think I should not mistake the Apostle's argument, by giving it in this manner. " You " (speaking to the Jews) are offended, that " other nations, and those not complying " with the rites and ceremonies of Moses, " should be admitted into God's favour. " Are you indignant, because this is " God's will and pleasure, because He so " purposed ? Look at your own history ; " appeal to Moses himself ; you have no " objection, you make no reclamation, " because it was God's will and pleasure " that Jacob (without any regard to works) " should be preferred to Esau. Why may " not God, then, the Father of all mankind, " by the same rule, call others, and reject " you, both being sinners alike ? The " partial dispensation of the Old Testament " only made way to this last and perfect

“ manifestation of his will. Pharaoh, of  
 “ old, was raised up for this cause, under  
 “ the same *partial* administration of God’s  
 “ power, that *his name* might be declared  
 “ throughout all the earth. Is it unright-  
 “ eousness in God so to determine? Ask  
 “ your own lawgiver,—‘ I will have mercy  
 “ ‘ on whom I will have mercy; and whom I  
 “ ‘ will, I will pardon!’ You, then, of  
 “ all people, cannot complain; who, in  
 “ your own oracles, appeal to and trium-  
 “ phantly boast of God’s *partiality*. But  
 “ he is not partial in this, he is only just,  
 “ and fulfilling that intention which so long  
 “ since He revealed to Abraham.”

The penitent and converted, of all nations  
 who form the Christian church, are now  
 called to the feast; and the impenitent and  
 unconverted Jew is shut out; “ and so  
 “ shall the last be first, and the first last.”

I have thus briefly stated what appears  
 to me the course of St. Paul’s argument;  
 nor can I, after much attention, conceive  
 how it can in any other way be made con-  
 sistent with the Scripture, or the Apostle’s  
 own reasoning.

If we ask, why the Jews were thus rejected?  
 there cannot be a more direct and plain  
 answer, than St. Peter gives in the third  
 chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. “ The

“ God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and Jacob,  
 “ the GOD of our fathers has glorified  
 “ JESUS, whom ye delivered up, and denied  
 “ him, in the presence of Pilate, when he  
 “ determined to let him go; but ye denied  
 “ the HOLY ONE and the JUST, and killed  
 “ the Prince of Life, whom GOD raised  
 “ from the dead.” This is the reason  
 why now “ Jacob is hated, and Esau is  
 “ loved.”

“ And now, brethren, (the Apostle con-  
 “ tinues) not that through ignorance ye did  
 “ it, as did likewise your rulers. But those  
 “ things which GOD had before shewn  
 “ by the mouth of all his prophets, he  
 “ hath so fulfilled.” “ Repent, therefore,  
 “ and be converted, that your sins may  
 “ be blotted out !”

If there could be yet a doubt, what has  
 been said might be confirmed by the thir-  
 teenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

“ Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold,  
 “ and said, It was necessary the word of  
 “ GOD should first have been spoken to  
 “ you (the Jews): but seeing ye put it  
 “ from you, and JUDGE YOURSELVES UN-  
 “ WORTHY OF EVERLASTING LIFE, lo,  
 “ we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath  
 “ the LORD commanded, saying, I have  
 “ set thee to be a light unto the Gentiles

“that thou shouldest be for salvation  
“unto the *ends of the earth*.

“And when the Gentiles heard this,  
“they were glad, and glorified the *word*  
“of the LORD, and as many as were or-  
“dained to eternal life believed.”\*

I shall only bring forward one more proof,  
to shew that the mention here made of Jacob  
and Esau has reference expressly to the ad-  
mission of the Gentiles, by referring to  
that very prophet from whom St. Paul takes  
the expression. It is in the first chapter of  
Malachi, 2d verse. “I have loved you,  
“saith the LORD. Yet ye say, wherein hast  
“thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob’s  
“brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved  
“Jacob, and I hated Esau.” Verse 3d.  
After this, for the transgression of the priests  
and people, he says, “I have no pleasure in  
“you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither  
“will I accept an offering at your hand. For  
“from the RISING of the SUN even unto the  
“GOING DOWN of the SAME, my name shall  
“be great among the GENTILES; and in

\* The words of the original are, *Και πιστεύσαντες  
εἰσὶν τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώναν.*

I submit to the reader conversant with the language,  
whether the sense be not, “that those who-believed were  
“placed in order towards attaining eternal life:” the  
meaning of *τεταγμένοι* not being “ordained,” but “placed  
“in order.”

“ EVERY PLACE incense shall be offered  
 “ unto my name, and a pure offering :  
 “ for my name shall be great AMONG the  
 “ HEATHEN ! ” Verses 10 and 11.

Words cannot stronger express the extent of universal dominion and the eternal triumph of the pure religion of Christianity over the Jewish polity. These circumstances, then, will give us a clear insight into the meaning of the words, “ and hath not God power to  
 “ make one vessel unto honour, and another  
 “ to dishonour ? What if God, willing to  
 “ shew his wrath, and to make his power  
 “ known, endure, with much longer suffer-  
 “ ing, the *vessels of wrath*, filled to *destruc-*  
 “ *tion* ; and that he might make known the  
 “ riches of his mercy, which he had *afore*  
 “ *prepared* unto glory ; even us whom he had  
 “ called ; not of the Jews only, but of the Gen-  
 “ tiles.” As he saith in Hosea, “ I once called  
 “ them my people, which were *not* my people,  
 “ and her beloved, which was *not* beloved.”

The vessels of wrath, endured with much long suffering, and filled to destruction, who were they, but these Jews, who, by their hardheartedness, and by their obstinacy, and afterwards by seeking righteousness by the WORKS OF THE LAW, not by FAITH IN CHRIST, had fulfilled “ the  
 “ measure of iniquity.”

But note, even in this rejection, the kindness of GOD, which, through the whole history of his dealings with the Jews, is manifested : For why did St. Paul preach so earnestly to them? that the “goodness “and long-suffering of GOD might lead “them to *repentance*.” When our Saviour looked down on the city of Jerusalem, hear his affectionate address. “O JERUSALEM, JERUSALEM, thou that “slayest the prophets, and KILLEST those “that are sent unto thee, HOW OFTEN “would I have GATHERED your children “together, even as a hen gathers her “chickens under her wing, and YE WOULD “NOT. Behold your house is left unto “you DESOLATE !” Her house was left desolate, because neither entreaties, nor arguments, nor tokens of “mercy and long-suffering,” nor the voice of the Son of GOD himself, moved them, that they might repent, and be forgiven.

Such are the dealings of GOD with a nation, whom yet He does not entirely “CAST off,” but calls to repentance by the Apostle.

If we apply to such as have been described, the words “vessels of wrath filled to destruction,” and take the words in conjunction with what has been said of the “long-suffering of Him who willeth not

“ that any should die ; ” all is consistent, agreeable to the tenour of the Gospel history, and that mercy of God which is over all his works.

If these terrific words are applied to individuals, the arguments are not only unjust, but inconsequent ; and nothing but the certainty that God so pronounced ought to induce us to take them in this sense.

Having made this explanation, I hope, clear, to the humblest capacity of any one who pays attention to his Bible ; I shall consider the chief of those passages in the Scripture, where the word *election* or *elect* is used ; by which we shall next see, when they are so used, whether particular election of individuals could be intended.

In the first place, the word **ELECTION** is not mentioned at all in the **FOUR GOSPELS** ; neither by St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, or St. John, the disciple whom JESUS loved, and who leaned on his bosom at the last supper ; nor by JESUS CHRIST himself. This is enough to satisfy us, how little necessity there can be for believing individual election, when the word is not even mentioned in the Gospel.

The word *elect* is used in the awful description of the last judgment ; but wherever it is used, it will appear to relate only to those



who are admitted into the Christian covenant; for final salvation belongs only to those who, having been so admitted, " endure to the end."

This is the sense in which these words are to be understood, " he shall gather the *elect* from the four winds;" (St. Mark :) which is saying no more than CHRIST himself said, when he described the " RIGHTEOUS," who were to " inherit the kingdom prepared from the beginning of the world." Where the word *elect* is used in other passages, it will appear to apply only to those who, like the apostles themselves, were especially called, or to those who were first admitted into the christian covenant. In the Epistles, the word is used, as thus generally applied, *eight times*. It will be sufficient for me to prove it is only generally, and not particularly, applied, by two remarkable passages, which are, in my opinion, decisive, as to this point; that when the Apostles used the word, they themselves meant it in its *general sense*, and could not have meant it otherwise.

It is applied by St. Peter to the strangers scattered " *throughout*" the countries Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia? Can it be supposed, that throughout these extensive regions, he

means only *elected individuals*, and not Christian converts in general. Why is the epistle called *general*? because it was addressed to all in those countries, who had embraced the Christian covenant. But St. John uses the word more particularly in his epistle, for he says "to the elect lady." Now this expression, so applied to a particular person, must decide, if any thing can decide, the meaning of the Apostle. Shall we abide by this? Look then: the very lady whom St. John calls "ELECT," in a few verses after, he warns, with the greatest earnestness, against *false teachers*; so little did St. John think her *election sure*, though he calls her *elect*. "LOOK TO YOURSELVES, that we lose not those things which we have wrought." Verse 8.

I have more pointedly dwelt on those passages, where the words *election* and *elect*, are used, that you might be convinced that the meaning of the Apostle could not be such as those who build creeds upon *separate* texts, would make us believe. If the certainty of election might be applied to one human being, independently of the grounds of comfort and reliance which are derived from a good conscience, it might be applied to St. Paul himself, and to those who, selected from the world, attended him

in his travels, and were witness to his afflictions and trials. Yet of himself he says, " I exercise myself day and night, to have a conscience void of offence to God and towards man ; lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away !" And of his own companions he writes thus by name : " Hy-menæus, Alexander, Phygettus, Hermogenes, and all those which were in *Asia*, [those whom St. Peter called elect] are turned from me : " even Demas, who came with him to Rome, had forsaken him, having loved the things of the present world."

I trust I have said enough to convince you, if you rely on the scripture alone, as I trust you do, that there are no grounds from that scripture to believe that the words *elect* and *election* apply to *individuals* : on the contrary, there is every reason to believe they apply only to the great purpose of God in calling the Gentiles ; to those who first embraced the Christian faith, and this without reference to their final justification.

As I observed that the word *election* was not in St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, or St. John ; so I will be bold to affirm, that in no part of the Gospel, or of the Epistles, in no chapter, in no verse, in no part, from the

beginning to the end in letter or in spirit, is it required as a necessary ARTICLE OF BELIEF.

When the terrified jailor, in the Acts of the Apostles, after the earthquake, with looks of dismay, fell at the feet of Peter, saying, "what shall I do?" did St. Peter reply, "Believe in predestination and election, "and you shall be saved?" when if these words were explained as some boldly preach, this jailor must have known, after all, that he might not be saved, whether he believed them or not. No! St. Peter answered, "Believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and "thou shalt be saved."

CHRISTIANS, remember that the Scripture, besides reproofs, promises, and threatenings, contains *declarations* and *commands*. Some things are OBSCURELY DECLARED, and some things POSITIVELY COMMANDED. Which shall we follow? If we fly to JESUS CHRIST, as we are *commanded*, by faith and repentance; mercy, love, peace, pardon, seem to visit our hearts, as with a ray from Heaven!

If we consult his *everlasting word*, how calm are its consolations, yet how sublime its views! how fervent, and yet how composed, its spirit! It speaks, it persuades, it exhorts, it consoles, it animates, and brings

every thought in subjection to one awful object,—JESUS CHRIST, and HIM CRUCIFIED.

How different are the feelings of him who looks to those parts alone which furnish matter for “doubtful disputations;” which he magnifies, and thinks as necessary for his salvation, as those things are which CHRIST himself positively *commanded*.

Predestination and election, then, are matters of private speculation, not matters of *scriptural command*; and as matters of private speculation, may be true or false. The only question, therefore, a sincere Christian would ask, is, whether the belief in them is *commanded*? This, I am confident, is not. As matters of “subtle “disputations,” they are injurious to the religious principles of the individual only when they affect his own mind, or his christian charity to others. They are injurious, most injurious to the publick, when they strike at the root of moral obligation, or the ideas of GOD’S RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE; and who can say, that such opinions generally disseminated, do not? Whether true or false, dangerous or not dangerous, as speculative opinions, I know (and I defy all the sophists in the world to prove the contrary) that the belief of them is not COMMANDED in the scriptures; and the

arguments, I hope, will convince my hearers, that when St. Paul employed the words, he did not employ them in the way in which they sometimes (to suit a peculiar system) are interpreted. How far the consideration of them may affect the religious peace and charity of a mistaken, but sincere Christian, I leave you to judge; from a picture, to be met with every day, which I shall present, without the least exaggeration of colouring.

A poor man of this temper, in his solitary and disconsolate musings, thinks of nothing but the words, "Esau have I hated, and Jacob have I loved." He endeavours to turn his thoughts to what is more animating in the hope of a Christian; he thinks of God's mercy,—of a Redeemer, whose arms are stretched out from the cross, as if to embrace all the sinful and afflicted race of mankind.

Still the words sound in his ear, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." After nights and days of inquietude, he perhaps ventures to look up, and thinks that he may be among those that are "*loved*;" at last this hope settles into a kind of dark belief: Still his spirit is not at rest; he does not merely exclaim, with St. Paul, when "waiting for the redemption of the body, *who shall deliver me from this death?*" but, *who*

shall deliver me from the terrors of God ? who shall rescue my soul, who shall save me from that pit where the " worm dieth not," in that world which lies for ever in darkness, beyond the light and glimmer of God's mercy ?

At length this tempest of the soul, from natural causes, subsides: on a sudden, there is no more uncertainty; we are instantly called to admire the effects of God's wonderful dealings with this forlorn individual. All is passed, the sunshine returns to the deserted soul; but is it the real, the sincere "*joy and peace of believing?*" With some, perhaps, it may; but with the majority, *despondence* is succeeded by *presumption*: so that being tossed between the extremes of presumption and despair; self-love at last leads them on the safe side. They have no doubt now, but that they possess the *seal of salvation*; that they are the few, taken as *a brand out of the fire*, whilst the city of destruction is left to its fate, with all its multitudes.

How different is the calm conviction, the quiet and holy hope, of the man who makes God's word his rule. His meek and humble mind; his softened heart; his enlarged charities; his tender, yet delightful hopes; all contribute to compose his spirits, whilst they confirm his faith. His religion wears the

same smile in sickness and in health, it exhibits the same lovely and composed character, in joy and in tears. In the scripture there is no account of any individual, who experiences such violent transitions,\* except in particular instances; a sober, but a cheerful light is shed on the Christian's heart, which extends to all the scenes of nature, to all that is living round him; and which casts a ray beyond the darkness of the grave. O precious faith! O lively hope! O spirit of meek and humble charity! so fill, and animate, and enlarge our hearts; so conduct us in the path of our earthly pilgrimage; that when this "corruptible" shall put on incorruption," we may join the hosannas of thousands and ten thousands of saints, in the kingdom of God and of CHRIST.

"Worthy is the lamb that was slain,  
 "to receive honour, and glory, and power,  
 "now and for ever." To whom, &c.

\* See Preface.

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## SERMON VI.

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ROMANS X. 5.

*For Moses thus describeth the righteousness which is by the law, That the man which doeth these things shall live by them.*

**H**AVING so far made the points in this epistle, which relate to doctrine, the subject of these discourses; and having endeavoured, in the plainest manner, to set before you, according to my sincere conviction of their truth, the meaning of passages which have caused much misunderstanding; the concluding part of this epistle may be easily understood: In the most earnest and affectionate manner, the

Apostle exhorts his brethren not to reject the proffered mercies of God. "Brethren, my heart's desire, and prayer to God for Israel, is, that they may be saved." Every argument of encouragement, every topic of persuasion, is employed to soften their hearts.

"Hath God therefore cast off his people? God forbid. I am also an Israelite." But they must come into the flock of CHRIST, upon the same terms with other nations; and if it was determined that these also should be called to the faith and knowledge of God, it was in like manner foreseen, that all would not be hardened, but obey the call in righteousness. The wild olive of the Gentiles being engrafted on the stock, the tree, rooted and flourishing, should thus "become a pleasant plant."

The epistle concludes with general exhortations, both to Jew and Gentile, as now created in CHRIST to a new life of righteousness; it embraces all the duties of religion, of moral rectitude, and of social intercourse; and it were to be wished that all who quote St. Paul in one respect, would copy his constant example in the other.

The subjects of which I have hitherto treated, have been those of Christian doctrines, as they have unfolded themselves in

the course of this examination. These form only the first division of what I laid down as material points to be discussed. There are others, and those very important, which relate to the inward and habitual feelings which Christianity requires.

In what follows, I shall draw into as narrow a compass as I am able, a circumstance on which I have briefly touched before, the connection of the Old and New Testaments, with regard to the revelation of a future state; and in so doing, I shall set before you the progress by which, from the dawn in the Old Testament, this cheering but imperfect light increased under the Gospel to perfect day. There are two great and prominent circumstances, connected with each other, which are kept in view in every dispensation and revelation of God to man; and which appear, in conjunction, to pervade the scriptures, from Adam to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, and from Moses to CHRIST. These two circumstances are *atonement* and *immortality*; atonement is the "first" and last," the great connecting chain visible through the Old and New Testaments.

AT THE FALL, when the dreadful judgment was pronounced, of "DUST TO

"DUST," the Redeemer and Deliverer was promised; and the very first act recorded, AFTER THE FALL, was that of *sacrifice*; which as it could not have been traditionary, so its institution can only be supposed to have come from God himself, in solemn, sacred, and everlasting reference to the appointed time, when sin and sorrow should be no more; when "captivity should be led captive;" "DEATH SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY;" and the gates of immortality and glory again opened to the anxious and earnest hopes of all that live.

St. Paul, in the text, says of that "righteousness that is by the law, if a man do these things he shall live." And in confirmation, and I might say with decisive proof, that everlasting life is here intended, though obscurely spoken of, we may adduce the remarkable passage in which the young man, in the gospel, asks of our Saviour himself, what he should do to inherit everlasting life? Our Saviour does not here say, believe in me; but refers to the commandments in the table of Moses.

Shall we say, then, that immortality could be attained, independent of JESUS CHRIST? or if so, was this immortality revealed to Moses? St. Paul says, "death reigned until Moses;" and also, in the second chapter

of this epistle, speaking of the unconverted Jews and Gentiles, he says, "unto every one that doeth good, shall be glory and honour: to them that continue in well doing shall be glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life; the Gentile being judged by the light of nature, and the Jews by the law of God."

Could they, then, added to immortality, attain that glory in another world, which is laid up for those who seek it at the foot of the cross of CHRIST alone? This opinion might seem to strike at the root of the Christian covenant, and almost to do away the necessity of a Saviour.

Let us, then, attentively "search the scriptures," in which alone we presume we have eternal life, and compare the testimonies of the Old and New Covenant, relating to this momentous subject of enquiry. It is, indeed, true, that CHRIST himself tells us, in the case of the young man, that immortality is to be gained by keeping the commandments. "This do, and thou shalt live."

It ought, then, to be recollected, that at the fall of man, even before the judgment was pronounced, immediate provision was made for his restoration to righteousness and immortality.

This provision, (though, in fact, another life is not mentioned by Moses) is kept in view through the whole dispensation of mercy from God to man; and it could be only by virtue of this provision, that Adam, and Abraham, and Moses himself, when "gathered to his fathers," before the appearance of CHRIST in the flesh, could attain that inheritance which passeth not away.

I have been particular in stating this, because I have sometimes heard it adduced as an apparent contradiction. I shall follow the only guides we have or can have, and enquire in what manner it can be said with truth, that, even under the law of Moses, "the man that doeth these things shall live." The words have evidently a relation to what is said in the 15th chapter of Leviticus; and in Deuteronomy, there is a passage which expresses the same thing, "I have placed life and death before you." Except these two passages, through the whole of the books of Moses not one word is said, not a hint dropt, of man's immortality.

Of Adam, after the promise given, and provision made, by which the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head; of Adam himself it is only said, "he died;" and nothing more is recorded of the patri-

archs who succeeded him, than that they died; and Moses himself is "gathered to his fathers," without any other record, than that Moses, "the servant of the LORD," died in the land of Moab, according to "the word of the LORD."

This is a matter, of which any person who has a desire may by a little pains be convinced. I am not speaking of the idea we have of the immortality of the soul from feelings of nature, or from reason, but merely stating what is or is not said upon this subject in the five first books of the Bible. They are all called the Law, though three only are so, strictly speaking.

Whatever hopes we might form, and however reluctant our feelings might be to descend to that inevitable pit, where all things are forgotten; the judgment of God is, "dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return:" and through the whole of the books of Moses nothing is said of a hope or expectation beyond. As, then, we have this assurance of a life immortal, full and compleat, only by the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST; it will be a means of exciting more attention to this subject, and of shewing how much we owe to God, through a Redeemer's mercy; if we point out how this great truth advan-

ced, how this light gradually unfolded itself, from Moses through the prophets, and became clearer and clearer, the nearer the day-spring approached, when the Saviour of the world proclaimed, "I am the resurrection and the life."

Now the first intimation, after the books of Genesis, Deuteronomy, and Leviticus, which I find given of an after-life, beyond the valley and the shadow of death, in the Old Testament, is where Job thus earnestly entreateth the ALMIGHTY, (chapter xiv. 11.) "As the waters fall from the sea, and the flood drieth up; so man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.—If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, *till my change come.*" But the most striking of all is certainly where Job says expressly, "I know that my Redeemer liveth:" and I will not weaken the effect of this sublime passage, nor omit it, though it has been differently translated. In the Psalms, David, viewing, in the spirit of prophecy, the resurrection of our LORD, exclaims, "Thou didst not leave his soul in hell;" and then, as if this idea excited the most ardent hope of his own im-



mortality, he adds, "thou shalt shew *me* "the path of life."

The next remarkable passage respecting this momentous circumstance, which is indeed far more positive, is in Isaiah; and it will be recollected, that Isaiah, of all the prophets, spoke most clearly of the coming of CHRIST in the flesh. As if he foresaw, also, more clearly, that immortality, which was brought to light by the Gospel, he says, in direct words, "the dead shall arise, together with my dead body shall they arise."

And Daniel speaks expressly to the same purpose, and adds also the striking circumstance of judgment to come: (chap. xii. 2.) "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

These passages will be sufficient to shew how slowly and gradually the great and consoling doctrine of eternal life was revealed and unfolded to mankind. As the coming of CHRIST approached, this idea, filling the minds of the succeeding prophets, became more distinct; but it brightened into perfect day, at *his* glorious coming, who destroyed sin and death; and shewed us, no longer obscurely and darkly, but in living light, the great, the eventful, the

triumphant truth of an endless existence ; where those, who " have done good, shall " go into everlasting life ; and those who " have done evil, to the resurrection of " condemnation."

This important and most awful idea, which was the message of our Redeemer to fallen man pervades the whole of the New Testament. In his conversation with Nicodemus, our Saviour says plainly, " God so " loved the world, that He gave his only " begotten, that whosoever believed in Him, " should not perish, but have everlasting life." And when he is described as speaking to the woman of Samaria at the well, he says, " whosoever drinketh of this water shall " thirst again ; but whosoever drinketh of " the water that I shall give him, shall never " thirst ; but the well that I shall give him, " shall be a well springing to ETERNAL " LIFE." John. iv. During our LORD'S abode upon earth, his disciples were all convinced of this great truth. When he says to St. Peter, " wilt thou also go away ? " St. Peter earnestly and affectionately replies, " LORD, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast " the words of ETERNAL LIFE."

The resurrection from the dead, and the immortality of the soul, was indeed a doctrine, as we have seen from the passages in

Job, and Daniel, and Isaiah, and other prophets, which was not unknown to the generality of the Jewish nation. We are told as a remarkable fact, that the sect of the Sadducees denied the resurrection;\* which alone implies and proves that the Pharisees and others among the Jews did not only believe, but expect one. Mary, the sister of the dead Lazarus, says, "I know that my brother shall arise at the resurrection of the just at the last day." The cause of the Sadducees denying the resurrection I may explain to you: it was owing to what I have before noticed, that in the books of Moses nothing is spoken concerning it. As the five first books of the Bible were the books of the Law, which the Sadducees mostly valued, and as they paid little or no attention to the later prophets, so they did not admit any belief of a general resurrection; con-

\* St. Paul's opinion of the resurrection is in opposition both to the opinion of the Sadducees and of the Pharisees; one denying a resurrection entirely, and the other expecting a resurrection of the same identical being, with the same human passions and feelings, as when alive. This is not only plain from the question concerning the woman who had seven husbands, but is expressly mentioned by Josephus, the Jewish historian, who says, *ταῖς ἰδεῖν παρὰ τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἐκείνων*: "they believe they shall have the power of *living again*."

cerning which their great lawgiver Moses was silent. It is said that Jesus put the Sadducees to silence. How was this done? By Jesus asserting, on this very point, from these very writings on which they relied, that Abraham still *lived* with God. "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now he is not the God of the dead, but of the living." So the Sadducees were condemned, even from these very writings, on which alone they relied; and this also is the strongest proof, that though Moses was silent on the great subject of an after life, yet JESUS CHRIST, the second, and far greater, lawgiver, not only brought it to light, but expressly asserts it of those men, concerning whom in Moses we only read that "they died."

Now though the Pharisees admitted a resurrection from the dead, which the Sadducees, for reasons I have mentioned, denied; yet their notion of it was very imperfect and obscure: it is plain from their questions to Jesus, about the woman who had seven husbands, that they thought the body was to be precisely the same in the resurrection, and that the future life in no respect was to be different from the present. As the Apostles, after the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST, speak more particularly on this

subject, and St. Paul, to the Corinthians, more particularly than all; I think, from what St. Paul says, we may conclude that we do not rise with the *same bodies*. JESUS CHRIST himself did so, because it was necessary, *for a short time*, to convince his followers that he came with the same flesh and bones which he had upon earth. We shall all have a perfect *consciousness*, or otherwise there could be no judgment; but as to rising again with *the same flesh*, the words of the apostle seem to convey a meaning quite the contrary. His words are, "some man will say, How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be:" &c. and in another place, more directly, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth *corruption* inherit incorruption;" &c.

I have thus called your attention to this important and awful subject, because, notwithstanding the natural feelings of the human heart, we have no certainty of so great a truth, but from the glorious tidings of the gospel, from the resurrection of CHRIST. "The wages of sin is

“ DEATH, but the gift of GOD is ETER-  
 “ NAL LIFE, through JESUS CHRIST our  
 “ LORD.”

In what manner this great change is to take place, or in what form we are to come when “ the trumpet shall sound ;” as the GOD of nature has not thought fit to reveal, so we ought to wait in hope and assurance.

Thankful for all the mercies of a Redeemer’s love ; thankful, in particular, for this assurance of hope, which exceeds all that the world can give, let us lift up our thoughts to those views, which remain unfading in the Heavens ; to that light which can never fail ; to that GOD, whose eye is never closed. In the morn of our existence, and still more, as our feet are treading the downward path of life, which leads to dust and to silence, let this holy idea fill our hearts. Let us consider the troubles that await on our earthly pilgrimage, as the dust only which arises in the path of a summer’s day journey. Let us walk our short time appointed, as CHRISTIANS who boast that name ; and may we at last, when our worldly pilgrimage is ended, be found among the number of those, who hear the gracious words of Him, whose cross they bore !

- “ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit
  - “ the kingdom prepared for you, from
  - “ the foundation of the world!”
  - To whom with the Father, &c.
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## NOTES

TO SERMON V. AND VI.

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MELANCTHON,

### *On Original Sin.*

AS these discourses may fall into other hands than those to whom they were immediately addressed, I am induced to give the opinion of the most excellent and eloquent of the Reformers on this subject; as I think the doctrine of the Reformation is sometimes misunderstood, and the opinion of the great and good men, who drew up the Confession of Augsburg, might throw some light on our own article on this subject.

The words of Melancthon are as excellent as they are eloquent; but I beg it to be understood, I do not quote them *as authority*, for nothing ought to be considered as authority except the Bible itself; but as the sentiment of the most learned, eloquent, and excellent, and truly charitable, of all the Reformers.

“ Cum aspicimus calamitates humanas, mortem, et morbos, dolores innumeros, necesse multiplices, bella, magnorum urbium excidia, gentium dissipationes et vastationes, monemur quidem, ut cogitemus *tristem aliquem et magnam causam esse tantarum miseriarum*, in tam PRÆSTANTI NATURA generis humani, sed quæ sit prima et potissima causa, non scit humana ratio SINE VERBO DEI.”—*Melancthon de peccato.*



I am tempted on this occasion to add Melancthon's opinion, in confirmation of what has been said concerning "good works," in the second Sermon.

"De quibus rebus olim parùm docebant concionatores  
 "tantum puerilia, et non necessaria opera urgebant; ut  
 "*certas ferias, certa jejunia, fraternitates, peregrinationes,*  
 "cultus sanctorum, rosariæ, monachatum, et similia. In  
 "mente sunt aliquæ veræ notitiæ, ut numerorum, legis  
 "moralis, &c. quæ sine ullâ dubitatione sunt in suo  
 "genere RES BONÆ, videlicet conditæ a Deo, in humanâ  
 "naturâ, &c. Item, *στυγν* in corde, et virtutes heroicæ.  
 "Hæ non sunt suo genere peccata, et in renatis fiunt  
 "OPERA BONA."

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## SERMON VII.

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ROMANS viii. 22, 23.

*For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now: And not only THEY, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, TO WIT, the redemption of our body.*

**I** Have hitherto spoken of the Christian doctrines, contained in St. Paul's epistle, and endeavoured to give a general view of the course of argument which the Apostle pursues from the beginning to the end. As I am now about to speak of a more delicate and difficult subject; I shall revert to those particular texts, which appear more immediately to relate to INWARD FEELINGS of the heart.

This is a subject the more difficult, because, if, in setting the Apostolic writings before us, we may come to certainty respecting outward actions, and nearly so with respect to essential doctrines, (provided we look at the *whole evangelical* system, instead of confining our view to a part ;) yet, when religious feelings are concerned, our ideas must be less distinct ; as no one man can be certain that his feelings are the same as another's, let the given test be what it may.

As it was my object, in what I said before, to try doctrines by the *scripture*, and not the scripture by *doctrines* ; so, in treating on a subject so much more indistinct and vague, I would endeavour to prove the necessity of trying devotional feelings by the scripture, and not the scripture by our feelings, which must always lead to error.

Far be from me, however, the thought that would scan, and chill, and subdue, that holy and heavenly consolation, which the Christian derives from the communion with his God. May every thought which lifts his heart above this scene of sin and sorrow ; may every feeling which strengthens his reliance on spiritual aid and assistance ; may every comfort which he derives from the

Father of spirits ; still be inviolate and hallowed upon earth, till all hearts burn with one hope, and expand with one charity. My object would be to press on your attention, that *feelings alone*, let them be called by whatever name they may, are an uncertain and dangerous test of scripture truth. I would preserve, nourish, and invigorate them ; but I would keep them under the guidance of the written word. Coldness and fanaticism are equally remote from the language, and the spirit, of the bible.

The text which I have chosen, more than any other in the whole course of the gospel, implies a deep sensation, and almost supernatural emotion, of feeling ; and it has been adduced as describing the struggles which must take place in all men, before they can become *christians* ; in other words, (notwithstanding their baptism and repentance) before they can be completely regenerated. What grounds there are for this opinion, I shall leave you to judge, when I have explained them.

St. Paul says, the “ whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain till now.” Now observe, in the first place, this groaning could not have been on account of sins, for none were conscious of those sins, before the nature of sin was

brought to light by the gospel. The Gentiles were under sin, but knew not of it, and therefore could not "groan" on this account ; and yet the *whole creation* is described as "groaning" until now ; that is, "until CHRIST."

On this day, when we meet to commemorate the confirmation of all that is dear to our anxious hopes, the certainty of a resurrection from the grave, in consequence of our Saviour having triumphed over death, which enables the christian now to say, "O grave, where is thy victory?" it may not be unsuitable to the day, and will be consistent also with my plan, at this season, of explaining the difficult passages in St. Paul's Epistle, to lay before you the general purport of these verses. In the first place, because that they are obscure in themselves ; in the next place, because they have been misunderstood, in such a manner as, instead of creating hope and consolation, to have been the occasion of anxiety and disturbance of mind.

The difficulty of understanding them arises from the very strong expressions which the Apostle here uses, in speaking of that general dismay and agony of spirit, with which all sensible and intelligent beings contemplate the general doom of death,

under which, as the Apostle says, "the whole creation groaneth."

Stronger words could not be well used to express that hopelessness and desolation of heart, which a thinking and social being must have, who has not been enlightened by the knowledge of revealed truth, and who looks forward to the hour in which he must descend to that dust from which he was taken. Well might the Apostle say, "the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain, till now?" Till when? till the time when JESUS CHRIST "arose from the dead, and became "the first-fruits of them that slept."

But the Apostle adds, not only *the whole creation groaneth "until now,"* but we ALSO, who are the first called, who are the first-fruits of the spirit, "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of the body."

These expressions I conceive may be thus understood:—Though still under the bondage of the flesh, and doubtless prophetically looking forward to a life of trial and afflictions; knowing that he must bear witness to the truth of the resurrection of CHRIST, "in stripes, in imprisonment, in persecution, in perils," and in view of the most

excruciating tortures, it is no wonder St. Paul himself thus exclaims, "even we, we who are assured of the resurrection of our blessed master; we who look forward to a glorious inheritance with our Redeemer, still feel at times that dejection and dismay, which are inseparable from humanity." Even our Saviour in his agony prayed, "LORD, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ! nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." St. Paul, therefore, might well utter expressions which seem to convey the idea of the greatest struggles in his mind.

That St. Paul speaks of the general doom of death in this passage, will, I think, appear more clear, when you consider, that he says, he is "waiting for the adoption, to wit, redemption of the *body*!" He does not here speak of the redemption of the *SOUL*, but the redemption of the "*BODY*" from that law of mortality, by which it is consigned to the grave; and St. Paul describes himself as waiting in patience for that time when it will be like his glorious body, who subdued all things to himself. That this is the meaning of the words will be still more obvious, when we read to the end of this chapter: after saying that the Gentiles were predes-

ruined, as well those Jews, who should repent, and be converted, animated with the fulness of this triumphant expectation, looking back as with regret on the expression of dismay, which, in the thought of present and future tribulation, had escaped him; he now exclaims, with a solemn and most impressive earnestness, "Who is he that *condemneth*? It is CHRIST that died: yea! rather that is risen again, who sitteth at the right hand of GOD, who maketh intercession for us."

Again, with language very different from that which he had used, when speaking of the natural terrors which oppressed him, he now demands, "who shall *separate* us from the love of CHRIST?" Then (as if the prison and the sword appeared, in awful vision, before him) he goes on thus more eloquently, "SHALL TRIBULATION? OR DISTRESS? OR PERSECUTION? OR FAMINE? OR NAKEDNESS? OR PERIL? OF THE SWORD?" nay, "in all these we are MORE THAN CONQUERORS, through him that loved us?"

Let us recollect, when St. Paul is described as "groaning in spirit," it was not only from looking forward as a prophet to what he should suffer in the flesh, but also, in *looking back* upon his former life. We are neither looking forward to so painful an



end, nor back on a life, like his, which not only caused him thus "to groan in spirit," but gave great reason for the humility with which he calls himself *the chief of sinners*: For he was the greatest persecutor, in the beginning, of all who profess that faith, for which he was now ready to die; and though he was a "young man" at the time, and took no active part in the murder of the first martyr, Stephen, he says, he was "*consenting to his death.*" Few, therefore, can possibly say, that they were witness or consenting to the death of a fellow creature. But doubtless all have their ignorances, their infirmities, and their sins, to repent of and deplore. They must do this in the sincerity of their hearts; they must do this, to prepare themselves to receive the blessed promise of God's forgiveness, and eternal life: They must renounce all spiritual pride, and put on the purity and humility of children, being, through earnest prayer, strengthened by that assistance which is derived from the grace and mercy of HIM, through whom only it is said that they *can do all things*.

So far the scriptures positively enjoin, whether our sins have been more or less; but these things do not prove the necessity of our feeling those inward and supernatural

struggles, which, it is said, must take place in every regenerated heart, before it can witness what is called the "*new birth*."

Some, whilst they think St. Paul is here speaking of the pains of regeneration, and the new birth, instead of the resurrection of the body, perplex themselves in vain, because they have not a clear view of his general meaning. They think they must wait, with suspense, dismay, and dejection, for the hour, when the spirit bears witness that they have a new-found "**INTEREST**" in the Redeemer; which word is not in the whole Gospel. I shall, therefore, take this occasion of saying a few words, explanatory of the subject. And particularly in reference to the words of **JESUS CHRIST** to Nicodemus, we "must be born again."

Recollect the state of the Jews, as a nation glorying in their knowledge of **JEHOVAH**, yet always rebelling against Him, persecuting the prophets, and stoning those who were sent unto them. Wrapt up in contemplation of their own spiritual privileges, and despising and hating all but their own nation! they had need, indeed, of the warning voice of the **LORD**, that they must be *born again*; to be called from the dead works of their rites and ceremonies

to the spirit of righteousness and truth. And so have we and ALL, but when JESUS CHRIST says, "*we must be born again,*" he speaks not of the necessity of the previous struggle and conflict of the spirit. If this were necessary, it must doubtless have been more especially experienced by Nicodemus himself; to whom CHRIST first speaks of this new birth; but there is no account of his individual struggles, though he certainly became a disciple of CHRIST. None of the Evangelists speak of these conflicts, except in such terms as is apparent from every part of the scripture compared together, imply a new life from the dead law, and a new birth to christian purity. None of the apostles, none of the disciples, are described, as at all partaking in this kind of supernatural feeling, which some think to be absolutely necessary, before we can truly "taste how gracious the LORD is."

Now I do not like to go one step beyond the *gospel*. I plant my foot on that rock, and *that only*; to the *gospel* I appeal: "Whatsoever things are commanded," these observe, and do; but I should not think it necessary to disturb myself on account of those things which are *not* even mentioned in the *gospel*, and which therefore

have no other foundation than in the fancy or the credulity of man.

In the New Testament, all is calm, sedate, and majestic, worthy the name of God. It might lessen our confidence in those, who think religion best expressed by violent and tumultuous feelings, to remark that the only characters in the revelation of JESUS CHRIST so described are those who are described as being POSSESSED BY THE EVIL SPIRITS, instead of that Spirit, whose fruits are gentleness and peace.

- The life of a sincere believer, of a humble disciple of CHRIST, is not that of passions, raptures, or of deep and settled gloom; but of humble trust, of inward peace, and of holy joy; knowing that the "light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Christianity, indeed, has her communion above; she rests on the rock of faith; she lifts her eye to Heaven, but forgets not earth; connected with the one by HOPE, with the other by CHARITY. St. Paul, even to the Thessalonians, who appear to have been at the time under some particular persecutions, writes, "rejoice in the LORD alway, and again I say rejoice;"

and in the next verse, "let your MODE-  
"RATION be known unto all men."

Still, however, we must remember that it is also said, "work out your salvation  
"with fear and trembling." This joy, then, must be subdued; this hope mingled with trembling; this assurance marked with meekness; this rapture with humility. And as the sun, with silent but unceasing attraction, acts on the revolving planets; so also perpetual aid is required of GOD's grace, to bend to purity and holiness the slow and reluctant will!

If, then, christians have so just a reason in general for rejoicing in spirit and in hope, how much more have they for the sober rejoicing of the heart on this day of the resurrection of our LORD, which may be said to consummate all that is victorious in christian faith.

With these feelings let us live, with these hopes let us die; and may the grace of AL-  
MIGHTY GOD enable all christians to become partakers of the same blessed hope and joy.

Now to GOD the Father, &c.

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## SERMON VIII.

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ROMANS viii. 16.

*The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that  
we are the children of God.*

**T**HERE is no subject which the sublime system of christianity presents to our view, more important in itself, and at the same time more difficult of clear explanation, than that of the operation of the Spirit.

To deny the "witness" of this Spirit on the heart of the sincere believer, or to endeavour, by weakning definitions, to explain it away, were to deny not only the express words of JESUS CHRIST himself, but the uniform testimony of his gospel; and further, it were to divest religious duty of its most engaging and powerful aid.

On the other hand, to make any presumed sensible operation of the spirit the sole or chief test of the perfection of our faith, is to aid the cause sometimes of delusion, and sometimes of extravagance, very remote from the spirit of christianity. On this day, when the Holy Spirit was first poured out on the disciples ; when plenary inspiration, and tongues of fire, and gifts, and miracles, witnessed the chosen ministry of the covenant of grace and mercy ; in the conviction, that, now all these supernatural aids are withdrawn, and the Scriptures have become the sole foundation of our faith, no man can have any other title to claim the attention of his fellow creatures, than that of the sincerest endeavours to find the truth where alone it can be found unmixed with error, and then to expound it to the best of his understanding : On this day, I venture to offer such observations, as the particular occasion, and this momentous subject suggest.

My observations will of course be confined to what are called the *ordinary* operations of the Spirit ; and my object in endeavouring to throw some light, however faint, upon this difficult, but essential point of christian doctrine, will be to enforce the necessity of guarding against *two extremes* ; lest by one of them we might be disposed

totally to deny, or at least to contemplate the effects of the Spirit with indifference; and lest, by the other, we should be led into the regions of *undefined, unsubstantial, and unintelligible* ENTHUSIASM.

With regard to *christian doctrines*, human schemes and systems have often perverted the pure simplicity of the gospel. It is the consequence of such schemes, that some points in the bible, NOT peremptorily *commanded*, are magnified beyond their due proportion, to accord with the *scheme*; they are thus considered as being the *very essence*, whereas in fact they may be at best *indifferent*; whilst at the same time more essential points are overlooked or forgotten: So with respect to the Spirit, and that deep sense in the heart of "faith that worketh by love;" without it all professions are but as the sound of "tinkling brass;" but pretensions to sensible manifestations of this spirit, are most dangerous when these pretensions are made the only unequivocal test of true religion.

Words in the gospel, that do not imply *SENSATIONS* at all, or only so in particular passages, are often considered as having reference alone to *sensations*; and thus religion must depend on the more or less given quantity (which no one can exactly define) of these *sensations*. From



hence naturally flow all those feelings, possibly accompanied with the sincerest devotion, which, as they are not exactly cognizable under any specific name in the gospel, have gained names to suit their characters, among different descriptions of christians ; such as " interests, influxes, and " spiritual infusions."\* All these, and many more such words, are indicative of certain modes of *sensation* ; which, when they are carried *beyond* the bible test, are common to all *enthusiasts*, whether papists or protestants ; and when they are brought down to the test of the bible, and divested of their *distinguishing names*, are found to be no other feelings than those which every *sincere christian* acknowledges. The danger is,

• As Thomas Aquinas, the old Roman Catholic schoolman, uses the word "experience" in a very different sense from St. Paul ; those who so constantly employ it, use in the sense of Aquinas, not of St. Paul ; as they constantly use the word "assurance" in the sense of St. Teresa, St. Francis, St. Catherine, &c. not in sense of the " assurance of hope," the " good foundation of assurance," which all christians must have.

I cannot help expressing some surprise that a publication, coming under the auspices of the "Society for promoting Christian Knowledge," should assert that "denying the doctrines of assurances" is a distinguishing error of the *catholics*. I do not know the authority for this assertion ; but surely the "Golden Legend" is full of "assurances," from beginning to end.

that one man will try another man's christianity by his own *sensations*. If there be one circumstance in the gospel relating to religious sensations, which more requires guard and correction than any other, it is where the things which belong to the Spirit are spoken of.

Now, without denying the witness of the Spirit on the heart, which we cannot do without denying the gospel, when such feelings are required, as are nowhere clearly described in the Bible, and when we make *these feelings* the *very test and proof* of our being in the *truth*; then, I say, we are obliged to give up the only sure and certain ground.

I do not fear to say, that to justify the extremes to which men have been led by insisting on *this* as an essential article of belief, or on *that*, as an unerring testimony of the work of salvation begun in our hearts; both, like those whose superstition they supplanted, leave the express words of the Bible, and try the Gospel by their sensations, not their sensations by the Gospel. As the "INTERESTS" of the modern baptists have no more authority from the Bible, than the *purgatory* of the *Catholics*; and as predestination, whether it be true or false, is nowhere, in no one passage of the gospel, ever required as an article essentially neces-

to believe ; so religious feelings are called a sure test of christian faith, for which there is even NO NAME in ANY PART of the Bible ! The sober dictates of the gospel, are often forgotten, whilst the dreams and shadows of forgotten sects are revived under new auspices. Thus dispute must continue, whilst man is man ; for as no one can tell, whether one man's sensations are exactly the same as those of another, so all testimony drawn from such a evidence must ever be in its nature less easy of definition, than those things which relate to our BELIEF and ACTIONS. We have, and must have, till we look to the gospel, and the plain sense of the gospel alone, disputations as endless as ideas are various and confused.

To the test of the scripture, therefore, let us carry all these wavering and unsubstantial reveries ; before its steady and clear light they will appear like moats in the sunbeam. But let us at the same time endeavour to examine by that light faithfully what that light presents ; and be careful not to “*quench*” that holy spirit in the christian's heart, by which alone we derive AID to assist our endeavours, ANIMATION to excite our hopes, CHARITY to enlarge our hearts, and CONSOLATION to support our sorrows.

The word Spirit is used on upwards of an hundred occasions in the New Testament, and in almost all with as great a variety of applications. In some places it means the visible presence of the Holy Ghost, as where it descended in the form of a dove, or where it is described as in the shape of fiery tongues. In other places of the New Testament, it is used to denote the spirit of immortality, in opposition to the corruption of nature ; in some places, the law of the *gospel*, in opposition to the *law of Moses* ; the spirit of *prophecy*, in others. In the words of the text, two things are evidently meant to be conveyed by the same word. “ The Holy • “ Ghost bears witness with our spirit ;” that is, as I conceive, the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost, for whose assistance we pray, bears witness, together with the improved tempers, and purified dispositions, and exalted hopes of our own hearts, that we now are children of God. We, in the relation of CHRISTIANS, are become the children of God, by a new and more near relation, than subsisted between God and the Jews.

The two senses in which it is used in the text, I shall here consider as clearly expressing the ordinary operation of the Holy Spirit. No person of the present day, I think,

will be bold enough to lay claim to it, in the sense, and to the extent in which it was vouchsafed to the Apostles, and first preachers of the gospel. It was among them witnessed by effects no less miraculous than infallible, by immediate inspiration, by gifts of unknown tongues, by healing sickness, and by raising the dead.

Infallible as some disputants think themselves, in consequence of the degree in which they suppose they feel its awakening influence, and consider all beside themselves as *unregenerate and unconverted*; the boldest professor of sensible influences would not trust to them for enabling him to understand a *single sentence* of an *unknown tongue*! The humble christian looks for the operation of the Spirit in a far different manner; and without enthusiasm on one hand, or coldness on the other, he may feel its gracious effects, in that aid from Heaven, for which he is taught to pray; in that animation which uplifts his desponding eye, from the toils of life, to that kingdom which passeth not away, in that assurance\* of faith and hope, which almost consecrates his earthly career, and proves him, though a weary and perhaps friendless pilgrim on earth, destined for higher

\* I use "assurance," in the sense in which I conceive St. Paul uses it.

ends, and a nobler state of being; whilst with lowly heart, but lively hope, and composed joy, he presses on, through trials, and temptations, and sorrows, to immortality and glory.

Such assistance from the Holy Spirit the humblest christian may with confidence expect; and in such a manner, its assistance is promised to us and to our children, and “*to all*, as the Apostle says, that are “*afar off*.” To ALL in every age, who, trusting to no merits of their own, place their hopes only in the mercy of their Redeemer, and the assistance of the divine grace.

In what follows, I shall endeavour to shew by what signs and tokens, in ordinary cases, the gifts of the Spirit may be best ascertained and distinguished.

Let me here press on your attention the recollection that the first visible appearance of the Holy Spirit was in the form of *a dove*, to denote that *gentleness* which was to be the characteristic of *christians* in general. In union with this description, must be its fruits. “The *wisdom that is from above*, is first pure, then *peaceable*, “*gentle*, and easy to be entreated, full of “*mercy* and *good fruits*, without partiality, “and—without hypocrisy;” that is, without any pretensions to it, which will not abide the test of scripture. The Apostle further says,

“ the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, “ long-suffering, *gentleness, goodness, faith, “ meekness, and temperance.*” These definitions of the fruits and effects of the Holy Spirit are clear and decisive. It is an observation which I think may be made in general on the New Testament, that where any words are used, which relate to the *feelings or sensations*, the Apostle, and JESUS CHRIST himself, seem solicitous to prevent the possibility of misconception, or misunderstanding. So when CHRIST says, “ GOD is a spirit, and “ they who worship him, must worship him “ in spirit ;” he adds, “ and in truth !” as if this word were coupled, that mere spiritual claims might be submitted to the investigation of *truth*, and all rhapsodies of devotion brought to the sure criterion of the express word of GOD. So it is said, as if the danger was foreseen, “ believe not, “ but *try* the spirits whether they are of “ GOD ;” that is, examine whether they are evinced by that character which is unerring, and those fruits which the Apostle elsewhere so explicitly and clearly describes. In like manner, when he uses so complex a word as *joy* ; to guard it from mistake, he adds, “ peace in believing.”

“ The kingdom of GOD is righteousness, “ and *peace*, and joy in the Holy Spirit :”

and again, "Now the God of hope fill you  
"with all *joy* and *peace*, in believing that  
"ye may abound in *hope*, through the  
"power of the Holy Ghost!"

In these instances, and many others, so cautious does the Apostle seem to prevent the effects of mistaken enthusiasm, that he accurately defines the words, when he speaks of *spiritual devotion*.\*

Now while we pray for God's assistance to gain the fruits of the Spirit, meekness, lowliness, gentleness, kindness; let not our hearts condemn us, if we may not have those alternate fits of assurance and despair, of which neither CHRIST nor his apostles have spoken.

"If we say that the Spirit bears witness  
"with our spirit," let us ask, "whether  
"our spirit bears witness also?" Whether our heart and our conscience bear witness, that, as meek and blameless "children of  
"God," we have those infallible signs which we must have, if our spirit bears indeed witness, "the marks of humility and  
"charity." The communion of man with his Maker is that of silence, and submission, and awe; not of presumptuous and familiar assurances. When St. Paul uses the words

\* The same text which directs us to be "servent in  
"spirit," also directs us to be "not slothful in *business*."



“ full assurance,” for fear they might lead to spiritual presumption, he cautiously adds, the “ full assurance” of “ FAITH ;” and in another place, the “ full assurance” of “ HOPE !”

Let us never remove our eyes from the sober examples in the word of God. Those who make their own *temper*s, or their own *passions*, their Gospel, use the same language in all ages. Compare their language with the language of the Gospel. St. Matthew was called by CHRIST HIMSELF !

He had the full inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and after the whole scheme of the gospel was compleated, and the great Comforter sent whom CHRIST had promised, he wrote that Gospel, which now *calls*, as with an audible voice from Heaven, calls on *me*, on *you*, and on ALL. Compare his sobriety of language, with that of vain enthusiasts ! St. Matthew might have been that very publican that smote on his breast, and said, “ God be merciful to “ me a sinner.” Yet after he became a christian, a repentant, and regenerated christian, a disciple, an evangelist ; where is the boast of his *experience* ? When, the names of disciples are given, so far from calling himself “ sinner saved,” to shew his contrition and deep humility of spirit, he

still calls himself only "MATTHEW, the  
"PUBLICAN!"

Man must feel, and acknowledge, and lament his sins, his infirmities, and ignorances; but let him look for hope and consolation, and support, to the gospel, and to the gospel only. Let him turn humbly and steadily to that light.

Let us not be guided by the assurances of any sect or description of men, further than as they shall be found, on strict and impartial investigation, to accord with the written word of God.

Let us constantly compare our devotional spirit with that described every where in the New Testament. Let us "put on the ornament of meek and quiet spirit," rather than shew our religion by violent emotions. Hope and charity are emotions to a certain degree; all passions are emotions; but hope, and fear, and joy, and mercy, and affection, and tenderness of heart, and brotherly love, and zeal, when they become *christian*, lose all their tumults, which become subdued, as under the very eye of God.

By conforming our lives as nearly as possible to the precepts of the gospel, and regulating our christian conduct by the example of Him who was the author and finisher of our faith, we shall best make

our hearts a fit habitation and residence of the Holy Spirit; who, by purifying and sanctifying our corrupt nature, will gradually improve our souls, and render us fit for the communion of just men made perfect, among the pure and immortal spirits in the regions of eternal bliss.

Now to God the Father, &c.

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OBSERVATIONS.

*Faith not a transient emotion.*

THE pious and sincere, though inconsistent, WESLEY was aware that the extremes of seraphic contemplation and spiritual abstraction were not in scripture.

Speaking of those whom he calls "the *still* brothers and sisters;" he says, "I can find nothing of this kind in the gospel!" And yet he never thought of trying his own *fainting, crying, groaning, and ravished* "brothers and sisters" by the same unerring test; and he was ignorant that, in most instances, the moment he left the language of the Bible, the exact parallel was found in the *old Popish legends*, before the Reformation!

"The love of GOD was shed abroad with pains so violent, and yet so *ravishing*, my body was *almost* torn asunder. I loved; the Spirit cried *strong in* me; I *trembled*, I *fainted*; my soul was in the *holy* mount; IT HAD NO THOUGHTS OF COMING DOWN AGAIN INTO THE BODY." Modern Journal. "

Compare this first with St. Paul, and then with the St. Catherine, and say, which it is most like. "Her *burning love for Christ*, her *secret spouse*, was so *intense, excessive, and divine*; that she was often *sick*, *languishing*, *faint*, and moreover *consumed* with pure *love and affection*." Life of St. Catherine.

Faith is described first by the Schoolmen, if I am not deceived, as an *emotion* "of devotional rapture." The Apostles themselves could not have made a CREED of SENSATIONS. They have done all that could be done, by defining religious emotions as much as possible.

If we have established faith to be generally a deep conviction, an assured trust, a fixed principle, rather than a wavering emotion, at all events, it cannot possibly mislead.

When faith is said to "*work* by love," another and more animated characteristic is added ; if it has more or less of *doubt*, it must have more or less of *emotion* ; but this emotion springs not from faith, but from the degree of doubt ; hence the Apostle says, " LORD increase "our faith," but as "perfect love" casteth out fear, so faith, as an immutable christian principle, like a majestic silent stream, as it passes on, shews no perceptible motion, and makes no noise.

*" Sternit inanem fremitum."*

It is my intention to take every passage in the whole Gospel, which describes the passions : such as hope, joy, fear, love, &c. ; reverence, compassion, charity, &c. ; and compare them with the passions described by modern evangelists, and ancient Popish saints :—and to compare the same passions, and hallowed apostolic feelings, with the dignified and temperate language of the Church of England. The christian reader may then see with one view, which are most like, and most truly scriptural.

I think it would be of service to truth, also, to place in two opposite columns, respecting dogmas of belief, what is said by CHRIST and his Apostles, and what is directly asserted in *opposition*, by St. Augustine, Calvin, &c. There can be no gainsaying this mode of argument. In this manner :

CHRIST.	AUGUSTINE.
" Suffer little children to	" We must firmly believe
" come unto me, for such is	" <i>that infants</i> , dying in
" the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN."	" original sin, shall be
	" <i>punished</i> with ETER-
	" NAL FIRE !" &c.

Some observations on this point by Tertullian, before he became a frantic disciple of Montanus, are worthy of regard ;

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## SERMON IX.

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ACTS xiii. 2, 3.

*As they ministered unto the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.*

**D**URING the holy season which is passed, I endeavoured to make you acquainted with St. Paul's leading design, in writing the epistle to the Romans, and to explain some of the more difficult passages, which, when separated from the general argument, and considered by themselves, have been the occasion of much misunderstanding.

To give a perfect explanation of every word and sentence is not in my power,

nor in that of any man; for to do this, it would be necessary to be acquainted with all the objections which the Jews at that time made to St. Paul's doctrine. This no one can know, as none of their writings have come down to us, and we can only from some opinion of the general tendency of their objections from this epistle. I hope, however, I have been able to make you comprehend the general purport of it, and also to understand the meaning of the words *faith* and *works*, *election* and *predestination*, and other expressions, more clearly than you did before. In the following discourse, it is my intention to set before you some circumstances in the ministry, character, and conduct, of St. Paul himself, which may further assist you in understanding his writings, and which may be considered a proper conclusion to what I have before said.

I shall call your attention, not to any opinions of my own, but to what is plainly set down in the scriptures, leaving the scriptures (by which test we are always ready to abide) to speak for themselves.

The first point to which I would call your attention, is the subject of St. Paul's ministry. You know that he was the most violent among the persecutors of the disciples of CHRIST. You know, that he was miraculously and

supernaturally converted, by a light shining round about, and a voice heard from Heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And Saul answered, Who art thou? And the voice answered, I am "JESUS, whom thou persecutest." So far, all who hear must know, and also that he possessed the fulness of the Holy Ghost, and had the power of working miracles. But there are other things, which, perhaps, few among you have considered, and of some of which you must be ignorant.

You have never probably considered, that though St. Paul was thus miraculously called to the ministry; though the Holy Ghost was with him, "with signs and power;" though he was appointed by Providence to be the divine instructor of the wisest in their generation, the renowned philosophers and wise men of Greece; though he was endowed with powers of reasoning and eloquence, such as made Felix tremble, such as almost persuaded Agrippa to be a christian, such as, even at Athens, the most celebrated seat of Grecian learning, converted one of the chief magistrates from the worshipping of the "unknown "God," to adore that God who made "the world, that CHRIST who was risen from the dead; notwithstanding all these



testimonies to St. Paul's ministry, he did not take upon himself the office, till he was *regularly ordained, by the imposition of hands*; first, by that of Ananias, the disciple, at Damascus, and as if this was not sufficient, by that of the prophets and preachers at Antioch, before he was sent to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

I shall leave you to make any application which you please; but such was *the fact*, and such is the history of the gospel.

I proceed to speak of another part of St. Paul's character. Not only was he miraculously called, and filled with the "Holy Ghost, and with power;" but, as he was appointed to be the apostle of the Gentiles, not only the barbarians, but the Greeks, who were far superior in knowledge to any nation on the face of the earth, it was expedient for his ministry, that he also should excel in *human learning*.

The other apostles were plain, simple, and unlettered; and no doubt such men were so especially called, to confound the lofty pretensions of the Jew, and to cast down the high look of the proud and boasting Pharisee.

But St. Paul, though always speaking of his own human attainments, with modesty and humility, not even comparing himself with Plato, Socrates, and the orators

of Greece; considering, also, all his attainments as nothing, in comparison of the subject which engrossed all the feelings and faculties of his soul, "CHRIST, and him crucified;" St. Paul was as conspicuous for his *learning*, as he was supernaturally distinguished by the power of the Holy Ghost.

If it were necessary more particularly to prove this, I would desire you to remember, that he himself says, he "*was bred up at the feet of Gamaliel*;" and Gamaliel was the most learned of the Jewish teachers at the time. Of his general learning, there cannot be a stronger proof, than that of his acquaintance with the works of the celebrated writers of Greece, whose words and sentences he sometimes uses: as, in the epistle to the Corinthians, when speaking of so awful a subject as the resurrection of the dead, in one passage he says, "evil communications corrupt good manners." This is a line from the works of a celebrated writer of Greece; and not used in such a manner as if it was brought in by force, but mixed with St. Paul's own sentiments in such an unaffected way, as must shew his intimate acquaintance with the works of the writer whose words he employs. I might add other striking proofs, if it were necessary; but I shall only mention one more circumstance,

with which none of you, probably, are acquainted. The Apostles who preached the gospel first in Judea, being all illiterate and uneducated men, it might seem as if, in the case of St. Paul, as well as of his companion St. Luke, the idea was intended to be conveyed, that HUMAN KNOWLEDGE was not to be slighted, notwithstanding the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Besides his education at the feet of Gamaliel, and his instruction in general learning, let us enquire in what city St. Paul was born. Now, it is singular, he was a native of that very city, which, on account of its excellence in literature, was admitted, and on that account alone, into the rights of a free Roman city. St. Paul says, he was born a free Roman citizen. In chap. xxii. 3, of the Acts, St. Paul says, "I am verily a man which am  
 " a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia,  
 " yet brought up in this city at the feet of  
 " Gamaliel, and taught according to the  
 " perfect manner of the law of the fathers,  
 " and was zealous towards God, as ye all  
 " are this day."

In the latter part of the same chapter he says that he was a Roman, and free-born. The words are these, "and as they bound him  
 " with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion

“that stood by, is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. Then the chief captain came and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, I was born free.”

Now, I have no doubt it would puzzle many, who do not hesitate to speak with the utmost confidence of the most difficult parts of St. Paul's epistle, and the most mysterious doctrines of redemption, to give a clear account of this plain circumstance.

How could he be born a free Roman citizen, when he says he “was a Jew, born at Tarsus?” A very small degree of learning, then, will inform us. It is so said, because he was born in that city, which, from its eminence in arts and sciences,\* had received the privilege that all who were born there, were considered as *free citizens* of Rome. This essential privilege to this one city, where Paul was born, was granted by the Roman Senate; and therefore he says, he was a “*free-born Roman*.”

\* Strabo, as quoted by Moseri.

From these circumstances, we may conclude that St. Paul, who was sent, as the great apostle, to preach the gospel in Greece and Rome, was as accomplished in human learning, as he was powerful in eloquence, and moreover as he was supernaturally gifted with the power of the Holy Ghost.

When he says, he came not with enticing "*words of man's wisdom,*" he means both to shew that the highest human wisdom at best is worth nothing in comparison with the momentous and awful message with which he was entrusted; and also, that he neither sought or studied those ornaments of speech, in which the Grecians, above all nations, excelled. For he does not speak in this manner to the Jews at Rome, but to the accomplished Grecians; and the Thessalonians, Philippians, Corinthians, and Colossians, were all Grecians. So instructed, so endowed, so enlightened, and so inspired, stood before the people at Athens, the illustrious seat of all that was venerable in the arts, **ST. PAUL, THE APOSTLE OF CHRISTIANITY:** And imagination cannot conceive a more exalted picture, than when he thus appears, lowly *but commanding*, directing his hearers from the worship of the "**UNKNOWN GOD**" to Him that dwelleth in the

Heavens; preaching the resurrection of CHRIST, and the IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, in seats renowned for ancient philosophy, in the schools of Plato, who seemed to presage the first glimpse of the glorious light, among the statues, altars, and temples of barbarous Deities!

If, then, these acquirements in St. Paul had their use, how much more may we think human knowledge necessary, when none have now the power of working a miracle; and we may add, whatever claim some may lay to the supernatural direction of the Spirit, none can be *infallible*, because *none is extraordinarily inspired!* If they were so, indeed, no doubt, the Greek language would be as easy to them to understand and to speak, as the English: for the gospel was written in Greek, not in English; and none, that I know of, can understand the Greek, unless he learn it.

What, then, is it supposed, for a moment, that I can mean that all truths necessary for our salvation are not as clearly revealed to the unlearned as to the learned? The book of salvation is open to all, and all can read *there*, and *there only*, upon *repentance* and *obedience*, upon faith in CHRIST, their title to an "INHERITANCE IN HEAVEN," which passeth not away. These great truths, the wildest

savage of the remotest isle will be able to understand in his own language; when the "*sound which is to go out into all lands,*" has reached his ear. These truths, the lowest as well as the highest, the unlearned as well as the learned, may perceive and feel.

But the use of knowledge is found, when things not necessary to salvation are brought forward as if they *were*; and not only as if they *were*, but as if every body who did not believe this or that man's *interpretation*, did not believe the gospel!

For this reason I have endeavoured to call your attention, *not* to what I say, but to what the scriptures say themselves. Having spoken of St. Paul's learning, I shall, next Sunday, speak of other parts of his character, which it may be of use to you to contemplate. In the mean time, I entreat you, never to look beyond the scriptures, being convinced that these, and these only, can make us *wise to salvation*. Now to God, &c.

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## SERMON X.

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ACTS xvii. 16.

*Now, while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.*

**I**N my discourse, last Sunday, on the ministry of St. Paul, I spoke to you of the powers, and learning, and eloquence, with which he preached "CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED," among the altars and temples of the most renowned city of Greece.

In the following discourse, I shall pursue the subject, endeavouring to place before you some parts of his character, which are, in these times, most especially worthy our regard.

I shall not direct your thoughts to his ardent zeal, accompanied with unbounded charity; the pains with which, he says, he exercised himself day and night to "*have a conscience void of offence to God and towards men*;" to his humility, but at the same time, his deep conviction of the sacredness and dignity of



his office ; to his earnestness in enforcing every duty that ought to distinguish a parent, a citizen, a son, a husband, or man. But what I shall more particularly press upon your notice is that part of his character, by which he constantly shews, that he was himself the great original from whence he drew that exquisite picture of CHRISTIAN CHARITY, in the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians, whilst he boldly, at all times, announces the tidings of salvation, in defiance of persecution, bonds, and affliction; whilst he at all times shews himself deeply affected with the superstition and idolatry of the nations among which he sojourned; (as it is said in the text, “his spirit stirred within him when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry:”) yet with all these feelings, nothing appears more striking than his studiousness not to give offence in things indifferent, among those who had embraced the common hopes of christianity, however they might differ in smaller concerns, and though they might differ even in degrees of FAITH; for he says, “he that is weak in the faith, receive, but not to doubtful disputations.”

You will see this part of his character in a stronger point of view, when you consider how many religious disputes arise among

ourselves, and many about *things indifferent*; though we believe in the same God, the same Redeemer; though we have the same "hope of our calling," the same expectation of eternal life, through the mercy of Him, "through whom alone we *can do all things*:" Now let us recollect, that if St. Peter, himself inspired by supernatural wisdom, said of St. Paul, that he had written things "*hard to be understood*;" and that St. Paul says of St. Peter, "I withstood him to his face, "because he was to be blamed:" if, therefore, among men who were inspired, any misunderstanding in things of less momentous concern never interfered with the views in which they agreed, and the love and charity which their profession demanded; ought not this to be a *lasting* lesson to us? Shall we contend for things, which do *not concern* our *salvation*, when we agree in worshipping the same LORD, in resting our hopes on ONE and the SAME SAVIOUR?

It might serve to lessen our animosity, should we compare the christian world in which we live, with the idolatrous and corrupt world to whom St. Paul preached. Whatever publick or private offences we may deplore, I believe no man can cast an eye over a country, where CHRISTIANITY has prevailed, with all its various sects,

and communities, and compare it with that world which has not received the glorious tidings; without acknowledging how far superior, in every respect, is the world which has been enlightened by the common CREED OF CHRISTIANITY!

Yet when we read of St. Paul's invective against idolatry, and his injunction not to "conform to the world," we apply all these to ourselves and our neighbours, as if the idolatry and corruption of the world were precisely the same *now*, as they were *then*, and we do this with *more* asperity than St. Paul spake even of those that "*were without*." I would, therefore, set before you a short sketch of some of the vices and corruptions of the heathen world; that you may see, in the first place, how different the morals and manners of the most polished people were from ours, *imperfect christians* as we are.

As to the idolatry, bear in your remembrance, that not only departed heroes were worshipped, not only statues were erected, to represent some moral virtue, but to represent every vice which can defile the human heart—statues to the gods and goddesses of obscenity. On the altars of such gods, the christians were commanded even by the mild indifference of the Roman government, if not to bend their knee, at

least to throw incense. The festivals of these deities were celebrated by frantic and infuriate licentiousness of every kind ; —every decency of life trampled on ; —rites of the most horrid description were celebrated under the name of “ mysteries,” to which St. Paul alludes, when he says, “ it is a shame to speak of those things that “ are done in secret.” Such was the idolatry of the Gentiles ; and the manners of the people might well be supposed to partake of the same character. Here, behold infants, the fruits of unrestrained intercourse, left daily to perish by hunger, or devoured by dogs in the street : there, view with indignation sports, in which men were called to fight in public, divested of all dress, that those who were set coldly round to see them die, might witness the writhing of limbs, and contortions of countenance, which marked their last pangs !

. But why do I speak, in this place, of vices so degrading, of images from which we turn with horror ? To impress upon you, how much the world has improved, wherever christianity, and especially reformed christianity, has appeared ; and to excite the feelings of toleration and charity to those who worship with different views and ceremonies at the common altar of CHRIST.

Enough there is doubtless to deplore, and always will be, in publick manners, whilst man is as he is : but let us take care how we aim at impossibilities. We can never make men of one mind ; nor can we ever make all men pure, and holy, and kind, and humble, and meek, and charitable. A certain quantity of moral evil will exist in the world ; but while we deplore, and do all we can to prevent it, let us make a comparison fairly between the present generation and those that are passed : this alone would much soften our animosities, and enlarge our charities. Instead of this, when St. Paul tells us to avoid idolatry and evil communications, we look round us ! we can see no such idolatry, no such particular pollutions as Paul described ! What then ? we call every one idolatrous, because he does not worship exactly with the same forms as ourselves. Thus we perpetually hear the command, “ separate yourselves, come out from among them. Sanctify to the LORD a peculiar people.”

Doubtless, in every christian country, there are many who shew, by their conduct, that they are CHRISTIANS neither in THOUGHT NOR HEART : but if among many who are actuated by feelings of conscientious belief and duty ; if among many who profess and call

themselves "*christians*," and *endeavour sincerely* to act up to the character ; if among these there are found such as confine all "*godliness to their own pinfold*," who hold all but these whom they call *the Lord's people*, under the ban of a sullen and unsocial prescription ; who employ themselves in scanning *the mote in their brother's eye*, without so much as thinking of *the beam in their own* ; who wrap themselves up in a lofty contemplation of their own grace and favour in the sight of Heaven, while they consider all others hurrying on, good and bad, moral and immoral, in the *broad way that leadeth to destruction* ; --if such are found in a community of christians, whether churchmen or dissenters, whether preachers of *predestination* or of *purgatory* ; I do not fear to say, that these are, of all who make pretensions to christian truth, *least like christians* ; whoever is converted or regenerated, **THESE ARE NOT !**

Let us, therefore, of whatever persuasion, cultivate peace, and love, and charity. If we separate ourselves, let it not be from those who conscientiously disagree in point of doctrine or discipline ; but from those who seem to be actuated by *no principles*, either moral or religious. The varieties of christian worship, which do not affect the

great leading points of faith, and hope, and charity, let us tolerate and respect, as we would wish ourselves to be tolerated and respected. The principle of the REFORMATION strikes at the very root of the principle of HUMAN INFALLIBILITY! The BIBLE is, therefore, called the RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS; let us have this constantly in view; not regarding the *letter* only, but the whole *spirit*. With the cross of CHRIST before us, as we proceed on the journey of life, let the differences that caused us to "fall out by the way," be forgotten, as we approach nearer and nearer to that object of all our earthly solitudes; to these hopes only we can cling, when all human comforts fail; by this only shall we be enabled to reach those everlasting seats, that open in light beyond the darkness of the grave, through the path of love and charity on earth.

"Glory be to God on high, and on earth  
"peace, goodwill towards men."

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## APPENDIX.

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### CALVIN.

**A**S the act of CALVIN, to which I have spoken in the Preface, has been sometimes considered as being rather the consequence of the spirit of the times, than the temper of the man; I shall let extracts speak for themselves.

After SERVETUS had been condemned, CALVIN, visited him in prison, at the wretched victim's earnest entreaty, his agony at the thought of the horrors of his impending fate, are thus described by the pious reformer, in a letter published among his works. "After his condemnation, he appeared sometimes senseless, "belluana stupiditate, (with the stupidity of a "beast,) sometimes like a man lost, and when "his strength failed, he only could roar out, "after the manner of Spaniards, Mercy, Mercy!" *Tantum Hispani more reboavit, Misericordia, Misericordia!*

This is the description by CALVIN himself, without one word of human feelings, or natural



compassion !!! Though the victim had been many years his familiar correspondent !

With respect to the work of **SERVETUS**, for which he was burnt, *Christianismo Restituto*, it was published without name ; and it was in consequence of **CALVIN**'s information, who sent the letters that had passed between himself and **SERVETUS**, that it was known who was the author. He was condemned by **CALVIN**'s means to be burnt, for one and the same book, both by Papists and Calvinists. He came to Geneva, having with difficulty escaped the fires of the Papists, for *one night only*, on his way to Naples ; and hired a boat to go up the lake early the next morning : but the vigilant reformer was on the watch, and says, " he was taken by his means, and he would do all that lay in his power, that he should not escape *alive*." I forbear to add more, though there is enough in the history of this restorer of " **PURE CHRISTIANITY**," to make the blood run cold.

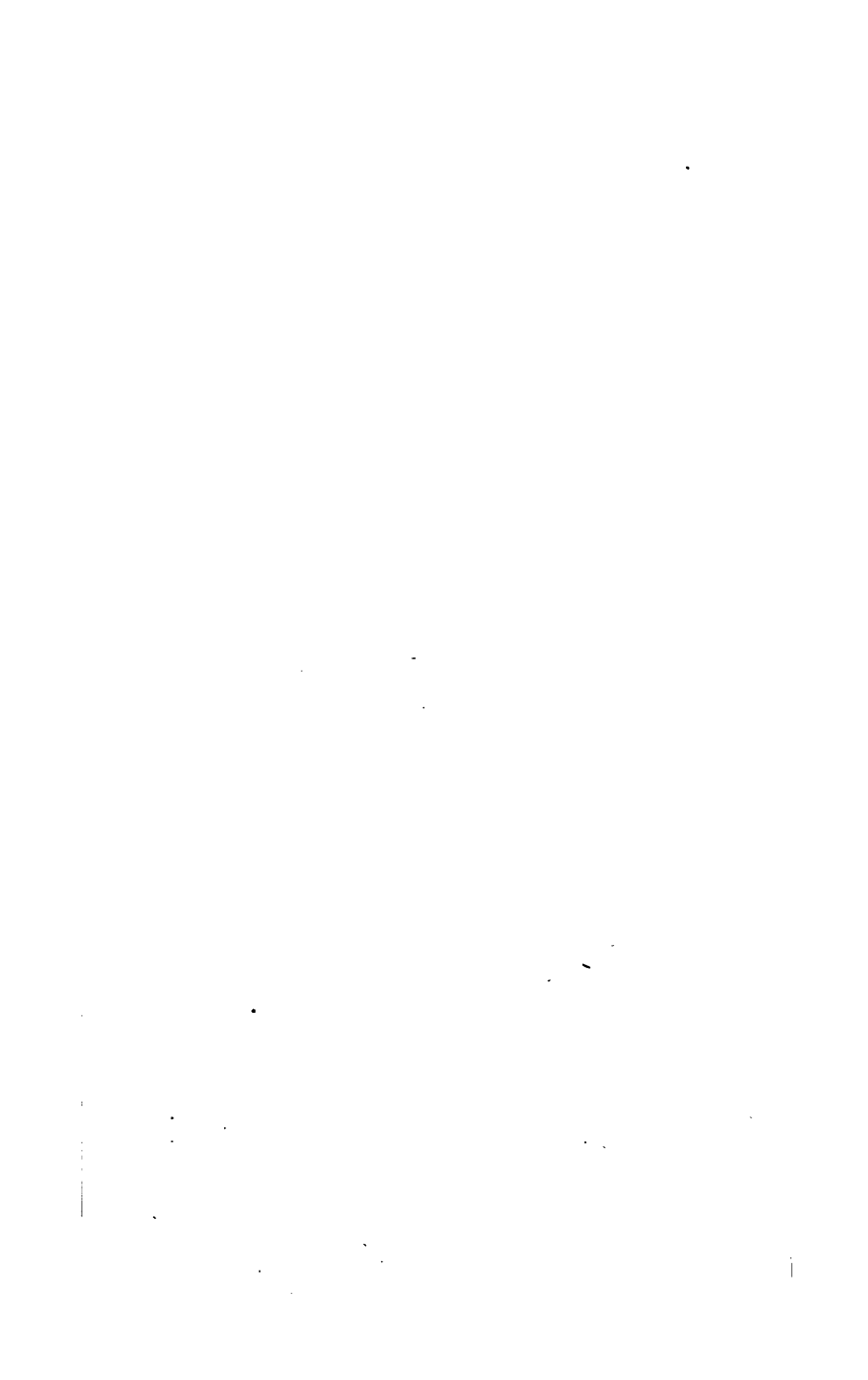
When it is said, which is indeed true, that **MELANCTON** gave his voice in favour of the condemnation, it should be remembered that, during a long life, **MELANCTON** never uttered a sentiment, or did an act abhorrent from the mildest spirit of christianity ; and before **MELANCTON**, in this instance, can be condemned, (though **GOD** forbid, I should defend it,) it should be borne in mind, that the answer of **MELANCTON** was to an *ex parte* statement.

ST. PAUL.

A direct interference of the Spirit is remarkable, when Paul is "compelled to go to Macedonia."

This circumstance has not to my knowledge been remarked, but it appears to me to be one of the most extraordinary connected with his ministry.

Why did the Spirit so positively command his going one way, when he had intended to go another? I presume this to have an obvious connection with his miraculous calling, being the most learned of the Jews, and selected, on this account, to preach "CHRIST CRUCIFIED" to the most learned and accomplished nation on earth. Hence he was compelled by the same Spirit, by which he was miraculously called, to "go into Macedonia;" and a more striking and impressive circumstance follows; that, at the entrance of the most illustrious city of the most illustrious nation, the first object which arrests his attention, is the "ALTAR TO THE UNKNOWN GOD;" and this leads him (as if the whole of the circumstances were in mysterious connection) to speak of that God to whom, obscure and unknown, the altar was erected! And from thence to instruct his hearers more fully concerning the nature of those high and holy mysteries, to propagate which, through the most distant nations, he was "set apart!"



## COTTAGE HYMNS.

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[A village School for the poor Children of Bremhill, Studley, &c. having been established, and superintended, by the benevolent Marchioness of LANSDOWNE, near Bowood ; I was induced to compose the following short Hymns for their use : which of course are not meant for places of worship, but are here added, as having some connection with the foregoing parochial discourses.

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### THE CHILDREN'S HYMN FOR THEIR PATRONESS.

**O**N GOD, whose eyes are over all,  
Who shews to all a father's care,  
First, with weak voice, we children call,  
And humbly raise our daily prayer.

And next to Her, who plac'd us here,  
 The path of knowledge to pursue,  
 (O witness all we have—a tear,)  
 Our heartfelt gratitude is due.

Our parents, when they draw their breath,  
 In pain, and to the grave descend,  
 Shall smile upon the bed of death,  
*To think their children have a friend.*

---

## MONDAY MORNING.

### SUN-RISE.

WHEN from my humble bed I rise,  
 And see the morning Sun ;  
 That glorious in the eastern skies,  
 His journey has begun ;

I think of that Almighty Pow'r,  
 Which call'd it forth from night ;  
 I think how many, at this hour,  
 Rejoice beneath its light ;

And then I pray, in every land,  
 Where'er its beams are shed,  
 That all who live, might bless the Hand,  
 Which gives their daily bread.

NOON.

IN want, in sickness, and in health,  
To every lot resign'd ;  
Oh ! grant me, LORD, before all wealth,  
A meek and thankful mind.

Though joys, like summer days, depart,  
Let not the just despair,  
FOR PEACE, O GOD, IS WHERE THOU ART,  
AND THOU ART EVERY WHERE.

The LORD may give, or take away,  
But nought our faith can move ;  
While we to Heav'n can look, and say,  
Our treasure is above.

---

EVENING.

AS homeward, by the ev'ning star,  
I haste along the plain,  
I see the taper's light afar  
Shine through our cottage pane.

My brothers and my sisters dear,  
The child upon the knee,  
Spring, when my hastening steps they hear,  
And smile to welcome me.

And when the fire is growing dim,  
And all our labours cease,  
I fold my hands, and say my hymn,  
And "lay me down in peace."

---

### CUCKOO.

THE Bee is humming in the Sun,  
The yellow Cowslip springs,  
And hark ! from yonder woodland's side  
Again the Cuckoo sings !

"Cuckoo! Cuckoo!" no other note,  
She sings, from day to day ;  
But I, though a poor Cottage Girl,  
Can talk, and read, and pray.

And whilst in knowledge I rejoice,  
Which heavenly truth displays,  
Oh ! let me still employ my voice  
In my Redeemer's praise.

---

### SHEEP-FOLD.

THE Sheep are in the fold by night,  
And many a tender lamb,  
New born, and trembling with delight,  
Lays bleating by its dam.

On her long wool the dew's are shed,  
 She seems with joy to swell,  
 While tinkling as she bends her head,  
 I hear, by fits, her bell.

So while for me a mother's prayer,  
 Ascends to Heaven above,  
 May I repay her tender care,  
 With gratitude and love.

---

### POOR MAN'S GRAVE.

THE poor old man is in his shroud,  
 His earthly toils are o'er,  
 The world's dark tempest, long and loud,  
 Shall never reach him more.

So he is gone, where small and great,  
 And poor, and high, and low,  
 And DIVES, proud with worldly state,  
 And LAZARUS must go.

May we perform our christian parts,  
 That He, in whom we trust,  
 May sanctify our humble hearts,  
 And raise us from the dust !



# SUNDAY MORNING.

THE Sunday bells are knolling slow,  
The summer morn how fair !  
While father, mother, children go,  
And seek the house of pray'r.

Some, musing, roam the church-yard round ;  
Some turn their head with sighs,  
And gaze upon the new-made ground,  
Where old GEORGE WILTSHIRE lies.

But see, the Pastor in his band,  
The bells have ceas'd to knoll ;  
Now enter, and at GOD's command,  
Think, CHRISTIAN, of thy soul.

Whilst heavenly hopes around thee shine,  
As in GOD's presence live,  
And calmer comforts shall be thine,  
Than all the world can give.

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## PRIMROSE.

'TIS the first Primrose ! see how meek,  
Yet beautiful, it looks ;  
As good a lesson it may speak,  
As that which is in books.

While gardens shew their flow'ring pride,  
Tall lilies' stately ranks,  
It loves its modest head to hide,  
Beneath the bramble banks.

And so the little cottage maid  
May bloom unseen, and die ;  
But she, when transient flow'rets fade,  
Shall live with CHRIST on high.

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### HOURL-GLASS.

AS by my mother's side I stand,  
Whose hairs from age are few and grey,  
I watch the hour-glass shed its sand,  
To mark how wears the night away.

Her sight, by years, is now decay'd ;  
The spectacles, to aid her eyes,  
Upon the BIBLE-LEAF are laid,  
That open in the window lies.

Though age must many ills endure,  
As time for ever runs away,  
This shews her christian comforts sure,  
And leads to Heav'n's eternal day.

### BIRD'S-NEST.

IN yonder brake there is a nest,  
 But come not, George, too nigh,  
 Lest the poor mother, frighten'd thence,  
 Should leave her young, and fly.

Think with what pain, thro' many a day,  
 Soft moss and straw she brought ;  
 And let our own dear mother's care,  
 Be present to our thought.

And think how must her heart deplore,  
 And droop with grief and pain,  
 If those whom she so fondly lov'd,  
 She ne'er should see again.

### THE MOWER.

THE mower sweeps his whistling blade,  
 Where green the meadow grows,  
 The honey-cups and cowslips fade,  
 All scatter'd as he goes.

So toiling time, as in despite  
 Of youth's delightful hours,  
 Sweeps on, resistless in his might,  
 And mows the fairest flow'rs.

I grieve not for the sweets that fade,  
 Since He in whom I trust,  
 Shall here protect, with heav'nly aid,  
 And raise me from the dust.

---

### SATURDAY NIGHT.

COME, let us, ere we go to bed,  
 O'er the decaying embers chat,  
 Though little MARY hangs her head,  
 And strokes no more the purring cat.

And let us tell how pris'ners pine  
 In silent dungeons, dark and drear,  
 Whilst in our face the embers shine,  
 And all is calm and peaceful here.

The English cot is free from cares ;  
 But see, the fire is wasted quite ;  
 Come, little MARY, say your pray'rs ;—  
 Kiss, mother, kiss ! good night, good night !

---

### SUNDAY NIGHT.

LET us unfold God's holy book,  
 And by the taper's light,  
 With hearts subdued, and sober look,  
 So spend the sabbath night.

Where now the thoughts of anxious life,  
 Its guilty pleasures where ?  
 Here die its loud and mourning strife,  
 And all its sounds of care.

Let other views our hearts engross,  
 To our Redeemer true,  
 Who seems, expiring on the cross,  
 To say " I DIED FOR YOU."

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### THE SWALLOW & RED-BREAST.

THE Swallows at the close of day,  
 When autumn shone with fainter ray,  
 Around the chimney circling flew,  
 Ere yet they bade a long adieu  
 To climes, where soon the winter drear  
 Shall close the unrejoicing year.  
 Now with swift wing they skim aloof,  
 Now settle on the crowded roof,  
 As counsel and advice to take,  
 E'er they the chilly North forsake :  
 Then one disdainful turn'd his eye,  
 Upon a red-breast twitt'ring nigh,  
 And thus began, with taunting scorn :—

‘ Thou household imp, obscure, forlorn,  
 ‘ Through the deep winter’s dreary day,  
 ‘ Here, dull and shiv’ring, shalt thou stay,  
 ‘ Whilst we, who make the world our home,  
 ‘ To softer climes, impatient roam ;

' Where summer still on some green isle  
' Rests, with her sweet and lovely smile :  
' Thus speeding far and far away,  
' We leave behind the short'ning day.'

" 'Tis true," (the Red-breast answer'd meek,)  
" No other scenes I ask or seek ;  
" To every change alike resign'd,  
" I fear not the cold winter's wind.  
" When spring returns, the circling year  
" Shall find me, still contented, here ;  
" But whilst my warm affections rest  
" Within the circle of my nest,  
" I learn to pity those that roam,  
" And love the more my humble home."

---

## CHRISTMAS-DAY.

WHAT Angel-voices from the sky  
Proclaim a Saviour's birth ?  
" GLORY (they sing) to GOD on HIGH :  
PEACE AND GOODWILL IN EARTH ?"

Catch the glad strain, ye Seraphs bright,  
The glorious tidings spread !  
Wake, wake, to wonder and to light,  
The slumbers of the dead !

Let the wide earth, from shore to shore,  
One loud Hosannah raise,  
" Glory to God, whom we adore,  
" Glory, and Hymns of Praise !"

## EASTER-DAY.

WHO is this, that through the sky,  
Uprising from the wormy sod,  
Serene, in victor-majesty,  
Ascends—ascends to Heav'n, a God?

SAVIOUR, LORD! I know thee now!  
Mighty to redeem and save,  
Such glory blazes on thy brow,  
Which flings its radiance on the grave.

SAVIOUR, LORD, the human soul,  
Forgotten every sorrow here,  
Shall thus, aspiring to its goal,  
Triumph in its native sphere.

## THE TWO SAILORS.

*Written at Greenwich.*

WHEN ev'ning listen'd to the dipping oar,  
Forgetting the loud city's ceaseless roar,  
By the green banks, where *Thames*, with conscious pride,  
Reflects that stately structure on his-side,  
Within whose walls, at their long labour's close,  
The Wanderers of the Ocean find repose,  
We pass'd in social ease the hours away,  
The passing visit of a summer's day.

While some to range the breezy hill are gone,  
I linger on the river's marge alone,  
Mingl'd with groups of antique sailors grey,  
And watching the last sunshine steal away.

As thus I mus'd, amidst the various train  
Of toil-worn wand'ers of the per'lous main,  
Two SAILORS—well I mark'd them—as the beam  
Of parting day yet linger'd on the stream,  
And the sun sunk behind the shady reach,  
Hasten'd with tott'ring footsteps to the beach!  
One led the other feebly by the hand—  
This could not see, and that could scarcely stand.  
The one had lost a limb in Nile's dread fight;  
Total eclipse had veil'd the other's sight  
For ever! As I drew more anxious near,  
I stood intent, if they should speak, to hear.  
But neither said a word!—he who was blind,  
Stood, as to feel the comfortable wind  
That gently lifted his grey hair—his face  
Seem'd then of a faint smile to wear the trace.—

The other fix'd his gaze upon the light,  
Parting, and when the Sun was vanish'd quite,  
Methought a starting tear, that Heav'n might bless,  
Unfelt, or felt with transient tenderness,  
Came to his aged eyes, and touch'd his cheek!  
Thus stood they, but no word did either speak.  
And then, as meek and silent as before,  
Back hand in hand they went, and left the shore.

As they departed through th' unheeding crowd,  
A caged bird sung from a casement loud,  
And then I heard alone that blind man say,  
"The music of the birds is sweet to-day!"

I said, "O Heavenly Father! none may know  
"The cause these have for silence or for woe!"  
Here they appear heart-stricken, yet resign'd  
Amidst the careless tumult of mankind.



" There is a world—A PURE, UNCLOUDED CLIME,  
 " Where there is neither GRIEF, nor DEATH, nor TIME !  
 " Nor loss of friends? Perhaps, when yonder bell  
 " Beat slow, and bade the dying day farewell ;  
 " Ere yet the glimmering landscape sunk in night,  
 " They thought upon that world of distant light !  
 " And when the blind man, lifting light his hair,  
 " Felt the faint wind, he rais'd a warmer pray'r,  
 " Then sigh'd, as the blithe bird sung o'er his head,  
 " NO MORN WILL SHINE TO ME, TILL I AM DEAD!"

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**FINIS.**

